







H.R.H. Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Tuesday visits with leaders of the Christian community to wish them and their congregations a merry Christmas.

## Regent visits Christian leaders on occasion of Christmas

AMMAN (Petra) — H.R.H. Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Tuesday wished the heads of the Christian communities a merry Christmas, noting that the holiday this year coincides with the Muslim feast of Al Isra and Miraj making it a doubly joyous season for the entire Jordanian family.

Speaking during a visit to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Sweifieh, the Regent said he was also conveying holiday greetings from His Majesty King Hussein.

"We share with you your joy at Christmas, and together we remember the Islamic-Christian co-existence and close relations over centuries," said Prince Hassan at his meeting with Patriarch Diodorus II, Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem, Bishop Salim Sayegh, head of the Roman Catholic community in Jordan and Father Nabil Haddad, a

Greek Catholic priest and head of the Jordan Caritas, as well as a group of prominent Christian citizens.

"We live as a united family in these holy lands, and we both work together towards deepening our faith in a climate characterised by affection and solidarity," said Prince Hassan.

He added that the time has come for all the world's nations to live in peace.

Referring to a message he received Tuesday from Pope John Paul II, the Regent said that the pontiff spoke of humanitarian issues, the role of women and the need to educate all members of society.

The Crown Prince said he hoped that by next Christmas the whole world would recognise the full rights of the Arab citizens living in this region and that all would enjoy a free and dignified life.

Greek Orthodox priest Adib Amman delivered an address on behalf of the Christian community leaders reaffirming all their congregations' allegiance to the Hashemite throne, pledging to work together towards safeguarding peaceful coexistence with all other communities and protecting the nation under the leadership of King Hussein.

Father Adib said the Regent's visit reflected the Hashemite family's determination to ensure justice, equality and freedom for all Jordanian citizens.

The Regent was accompanied on the visit by his advisor Mohammad Saqqaf and the director of his office, Michel Hamarneh, along with Sheikh Izzeddin Al Khatab Al Tamimi, the chief Islamic justice and Minister of Awqaf, and Islamic Affairs Abdul Salam Al Abbadi.

## Poultry farmers protest animal feed 'shortage'

AMMAN (Petra) — Poultry farmers gathered at the Ministry of Supply animal feed distribution centre at Jweideh, south of Amman, Tuesday to protest what they said were insufficient amounts of feed, especially corn in the past week.

The majority of the farmers signed a petition and sent it to Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali explaining that the shortage of animal feed would adversely affect their business.

Some farmers claimed that the centre was conducting a year end inventory, and thus temporarily suspended the distribution of animal feed.

In their petition, which urged the premier to intervene on their behalf, said that the Ministry of Supply's practice would create what they called a black market, which, they said, would force the farmers to abandon their businesses altogether.

The farmers demanded

that the distribution centres be opened and that sufficient corn be made available for sale.

In reply, Ministry of Supply Secretary General Mustafa Khleifat said that corn was in sufficient supply at the ministry's silos.

He also said that a vessel laden with 50,000 tonnes of corn is due to dock at Aqaba on Jan. 5, and the ministry has floated a tender for the importation of 100,000 tonnes of corn before the end of next month.

Mr. Khleifat said that Jordan's monthly need of corn for animal feed is 25,000 tonnes.

Noting that the ministry maintains a six-month supply of animal feed, Mr. Khleifat stressed that there was no truth in rumours that the ministry intended to raise the price of corn.

He charged that some farmers try to buy additional amounts of corn so that they can sell it in the black market, and the ministry was determined to prevent this sort of illicit activity.

Mr. Khleifat announced also that the ministry will

stop selling all kinds of food stuffs and animal feed for

three days starting Wednesday to allow for the annual

inventory by joint committees from the ministries of Supply and Finance and the Audit Bureau.

Poultry farmers Tuesday gather outside the Jweideh animal feed distribution centre to protest what they see as insufficient supplies of feed (Petra photo)

## HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

### Cabinet raises doctors' allowance

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet Tuesday raised the doctors' allowance to 100 per cent of the base salary for specialists and 30 per cent for general practitioners, according to Health Minister Aref Batayneh. The minister said the increase was necessary to ensure equity. The raise will take effect as of January 1995. Dr. Batayneh said.

### Senate refers budget to committee

AMMAN (Petra) — The Upper House of

Parliament Tuesday referred the draft fiscal budget for 1995 to its Finance Committee. The budget was passed Monday by the Lower House after a three-day debate attended by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and Cabinet ministers. The Upper House also elected Senator Ahmad Tarawneh as second deputy speaker in accordance with Article 6 of the Upper House statute. The Senate meeting under Speaker Ahmad Lawzi, also elected Qasim Obaidat as member of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee. The Senate session was attended by the Prime Minister and Cabinet ministers.

### Israel hopes for Gulf ties

(Continued from page 1)

cure a comprehensive and fair peace in the region."

In Damascus, Palestinian opponents of the peace process condemned Mr. Rabin's visit as a "dangerous step on the road to normalization" between Israel and Arab states.

A statement issued by a 10-member Palestinian alliance opposed to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)-Israeli peace deal described Mr. Rabin's visit as a "dangerous step on the undesired process of Arab normalization of ties with Israel."

"The visit reflects the rush of some Arab regimes to implement the American-

peace process and to create a new fait accompli that will cast a shadow on negotiations on the final status of the occupied Palestinian land," he said.

Tehran Radio warned that the United States and the "Zionist state had a coordinated plan to expand the sphere of capitulation to cover" the Gulf Arab states.

"But the expansion of relations between the Zionist regime and Arab leaders could create internal problems and raise questions about the legitimacy" of Arab leaders before their people, it said in a commentary.

"They are right to be scared, because that is exactly what we will do."

### El Khader

(Continued from page 1)

Ismaili plans at the expense of the Arab interests," the statement said.

Iran, which has good relations with Oman, also criticised the visit.

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## Jordan, U.S. draft extradition treaty

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordanian and U.S. officials have drawn up a draft memorandum of understanding on extradition of criminals between the two countries, Information Minister Jawad Anani said Tuesday.

Dr. Anani said the document, prepared after discussions between a senior Jordanian Justice Ministry delegation and State Department officials in Washington, had to be ratified by the two governments before its endorsement as a formal extradition treaty.

Asked what were the details of the draft accord, Dr. Anani would only say that "there are different standard forms of extradition treaties" and that particulars of the Jordanian-U.S. document would be studied by the government.

The Arabic-language daily, Al Aswaq, quoted Judge Adeeb Jalameh, who headed the justice ministry team to the talks in Washington last week, as saying that the draft accord listed all crimes for which extradition would be applicable.

However, it excludes political crimes and violent crimes committed against the heads of state of the two countries or any of their family members, Mr. Jalameh was quoted as saying.

Confirming that the two countries were involved in discussions on an extradition treaty, Justice Minister Hisham Al Tel said early this month that he expected the document to be finalised and ratified by the two governments in January.

Mr. Jalameh, who was accompanied by Judge Masoud Kook to the Washington talks, also told Al Aswaq that the proposed

extradition treaty would not have a time limit and would take retroactive effect.

However, it would not be applicable to Jordanian Mohammad Abequa, who is in detention in Jordan charged with killing his wife in the U.S. and fleeing with his children to the Kingdom to escape U.S. police, Mr. Jalameh said. He explained that no suspect or accused in Jordan under investigation by a Jordanian court would be covered by the proposed extradition agreement.

The U.S. government has sought the extradition of Mr. Abequa, whom U.S. law enforcement authorities have accused of strangling his wife in a dispute over their two children in July. Mr. Abequa, who was arrested by Jordanian security forces on July 20 and has reportedly confessed to the murder, is expected to be tried by a

Jordanian court. No date has been set.

U.S. law enforcement officials have visited Jordan several times to follow up on the case. The U.S. ambassador here, Wesley Egan, has said that he would continue to press the Jordanian government to extradite Mr. Abequa.

In fact, it was the Abequa case that prompted Jordanian-American talks on an extradition treaty between the two countries after U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, nudged by intervention by American congressmen, brought up the case during discussions with His Majesty King Hussein in July.

The two Abequa children, a girl of six and a boy of three, were returned to the U.S. with their maternal aunt in August.

Meanwhile, officials here could not confirm or deny a report that the Jordanian

government had asked Washington to extradite Mohammad Khalifa, a Saudi Arabian national believed to be living in the U.S. and sentenced to death in absentia by the Jordanian State Security Court in a subversion trial that ended last week.

Mr. Khalifa, a close relative of Saudi/Yemeni millionaire Osama Ben Laden who is accused of bankrolling extremist groups in the Arab World, was sentenced to death along with 10 others in the trial. A Jordanian and an Omani were also sentenced in absentia to death by the court.

Junior-level officials here said they were not aware of any Jordanian request for Mr. Khalifa's extradition from the U.S. At the same time, they said it was also possible that the Jordanian government could have done so.

## Some dairy prices to go up; producers call off strike

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A dispute between dairy producers and the Ministry of Supply over dairy prices Tuesday ended with the producers calling off a strike planned for today.

A spokesman for the dairy producers made the announcement Tuesday following a series of meetings with ministry officials which lasted more than two weeks.

Saleh Al Ra'i, a spokesman for the producers, said that Minister of Supply Adel Qudah had agreed to raise the prices of several dairy products, including a half-kilogramme of yogurt from 210 fils to 220 fils and a half-kilogramme of labaneh

from 690 fils to 720.

The agreement stipulates that the new prices will go into effect at the start of 1995, according to Mr. Ra'i.

The dairy producers had warned that they would stop production starting today unless they were allowed to raise the prices. They complained that the prices set by the ministry no longer reflected the real cost of production and that as a result they were incurring losses.

Mr. Qudah met with a committee representing the dairy producers Monday evening during which the issue was reviewed and the producers presented proof that their production costs had risen sharply in the past

few months.

The minister said that the hike in prices of certain dairy products was necessary to enable the dairy firms to continue production.

He was quoted by the committee members as saying that the Ministry of Supply would be ready to re-examine the situation should the cost of production rise again.

Mr. Ra'i said the producers appreciated the minister's response to their demands, adding that the committee later held a meeting at the Amman Chamber of Industry and declared the strike cancelled.

Jordan has 10 major dairy firms producing about 150 to 170 tonnes of milk products

RETURNS WITH DISTINCTION: H.R.H. Prince Faisal Ben Al Hussein Tuesday returned home from the United Kingdom where he completed a one-year military training course with distinction at the British Air Force College of Bracknell for Staff and Command. Prince Faisal holds the rank of a lieutenant colonel in the Royal Jordanian Air Force.

## Fire kills 110-year-old man

By Rana Husseini  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A centenarian Monday night died tragically in Ramtha when a lit kerosene heater fell on his bed, according to Public Security Department (PSD) reports.

The victim's son told police that he had gone to pray at a nearby mosque, and when he returned home he saw smoke and fire emitting from his father's bedchambers, the official said.

According to the report, the victim, identified only as A.M., (110) and physically handicapped, was

burnt beyond recognition. "It seems that the victim wanted to crawl out of his bed and accidentally knocked over the heater which started the fire," the official told the Jordan Times.

Meanwhile, police in Amman are investigating the death of a man, who was found in his house in Misdar Street by a neighbour, PSD reports showed.

Neither the deceased nor the neighbour, a woman, were identified. The woman told police that the man, who is believed to be in his early 70s and lives alone, had been living in isolation for the past six years.

## World journalists group to meet in Amman

AMMAN (I.T.) — The International Journalists Organisation (IJO) will hold its general assembly meeting in Amman on Jan. 28 with an expected attendance of 180 journalists representing 120 nations, according to an announcement Tuesday by Jordan Press Association (JPA) President Suleiman Qudah.

It is the first time such a conference is to be held in an Arab state by the IJO which was established in 1947 and is headquartered in Prague, said Mr. Qudah.

In addition the conference will be attended by delegates representing the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Arab Journalists Federation, Mr. Qudah said.

The four-day meeting, which will be held at the Amman Philadelphia Hotel, is scheduled to discuss the organisation's policies, amendments to its statutes, questions related to the protection of journalists and a report by the IJO's secretary general.

Issues concerning the journalism profession, programmes for training journalists and other related issues will also be on the agenda, he said.

The general conference will be preceded by a two-day meeting on Jan. 26 and 27 by the organisation's executive committee members, he added.

The IJO's activities and programmes for its 20,000 members are also expected to be reviewed, Mr. Qudah said.

He said preparations for the meeting are under way, and the JPA has informed the concerned government departments in the Kingdom in order to provide facilities for the conference.

## CORRECTION

The Jordan Times in its issue of Dec. 25-26 incorrectly reported that Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali received Tunisian Ambassador to Jordan Mohammad Mongi Labib, Mr. Labib is the former Tunisian ambassador. The Prime Minister in fact received current Ambassador Izzeddin Al Qarqani. The Jordan Times apologises for the error.

## WHAT'S GOING ON

### CHRISTMAS DISPLAY

★ Bani Hamida Christmas Display with a variety of small gift items at Bani Hamida House, Jabal Amman, First Circle, Ramtha Street.

★ ABC News Highlights and McNeil-Lehrer News Hour at the American Center at 5:00 p.m.

### DIALOGUE

★ Dialogue with artists Isma'il and Tamam Shammout at Abdul Hameed Shammout Foundation at 5:00 p.m.

★ Exhibition of oil paintings by Mohammad Musa at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art.

### EXHIBITIONS

## U.S. envoy heads to N. Korea; Pyongyang repeats spy claim

SEOUL (R) — A U.S. diplomat was en route to North Korea Tuesday to discuss the release of a captured American helicopter pilot whom North Korea says was on a spying mission when he was shot down over its territory 10 days ago.

North Korea raised the tempo by releasing a photograph it said was of Chief Warrant Officer Bobby Hall after his capture on Dec. 17. The photo shows a man in a flying kit, looking tense, with his hands up.

U.S. Cable News Network said North Korea's official news agency also released a photograph it said was of the wreckage of the helicopter. A U.S. military spokesman in

Seoul said it was too early to confirm the authenticity of the photographs.

The North has said Officer Hall is in good health but it has not allowed foreign contact with him.

The United States has expressed regret at what it called an accidental intrusion by the helicopter. But North Korea said what it termed an act of espionage needed further investigation under military law.

It's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) monitored in London Monday said Washington must "admit its responsibility as the offender" and show a reasonable attitude "before it is too late".

It said official investigations had shown this was not

an "accidental case" caused by a "mistake", but a deliberate act of espionage. "Detaining and investigating criminals is a matter related to our dignified sovereignty," it said.

"We categorically deny that it was on that kind of flight," said Jim Coles, a spokesman for the U.S. military in Seoul. "This was a routine training mission that unfortunately strayed into North Korean airspace."

KCNA said the Helicopter was seven kilometres inside its territory when it was brought down in flames by a single shot in the Ipho-Ri area of the eastern province of Kangwon. It said the aircraft ignored two warning signals and tried to escape.

### Scalfaro tries to solve Italian political crisis

ROME (R) — President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro resumed his search for a solution to Italy's deep political crisis Tuesday as outgoing Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi maintained pressure for a return to the ballot box.

Billionaire businessman Berlusconi, toppled last week by a rebellion from his Northern League coalition partner, evoked the spectre of a "communist" takeover as he outlined his opposition to a broad-based transitional government.

Northern League leader Umberto Bossi and Rocco Buttiglione, head of the small centrist Popular Party, are willing to work with the ex-communist Democratic Party of the Left in a new government to complete institutional reform before Italians are asked to vote again.

But that prospect fills media mogul Berlusconi with dread. "We are certain about one thing: We will never let Bossi and Buttiglione hand Italy over to the communists," Mr. Berlusconi said Monday night.

Mr. Berlusconi swept to power in general elections last March after a slick campaign in which he backed free-market policies and warned of the dangers of a shift to the left.

His Forza Italia party formed an electoral alliance with the federalist League in the north and the hard-right National Alliance in the south and he regards the League's decision to break ranks as treachery.

Mr. Berlusconi is demanding a snap general election and wants Mr. Scalfaro, arbiter in Italy's deepest political crisis for nearly two decades, to reappoint him as prime minister in the run-up to polls which could be held by late March.

But Mr. Berlusconi's opponents argue that his control of television through his three private channels and his appointments at state broadcaster Rai would make it impossible to stage a fair electoral campaign.

They also argue that a new electoral system used for the first time last March is flawed and needs refining.

Mr. Scalfaro, reported to

### China, Burma discuss border, economy

RANGOON (R) — Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng discussed border and economic issues with his Burmese counterpart Tuesday on the second day of a visit aimed at sealing ties with the ruling military regime.

Chinese officials said they were satisfied with the development of border trade with Burma, and the two governments urged the state and private sectors to expand burgeoning trade links, a Chinese spokesman said.

Mr. Li and Prime Minister Than Shwe, chairman of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) that came to power in 1988 after suppressing pro-democracy protests, also discussed joint efforts to combat drug trafficking.

In a banquet speech Monday night, Mr. Li recalled that the two countries had maintained friendly relations since establishing diplomatic ties 44 years ago.

Mr. Li praised Burma's abundant harvests, including record rice production, and its "laudable efforts in maintaining social stability, promoting national reconciliation and making contacts with the outside world."

China has steadfastly supported Burma against foreign criticism for human rights abuses and its main trading partner and arms supplier.

Gen. Than Shwe referred to the "five principles of peaceful coexistence" which characterised Sino-Burmese relations.

Burma and China earlier pledged a joint war against Golden Triangle heroin traffickers whose cross-border activities have thrived during China's 15 years of economic reforms.

### Republicans to begin 100 days of reform

WASHINGTON (R) — Republicans, who in January take control of both the House of Representatives and the Senate for the first time in 40 years, are poised to transform the way the United States is governed.

Under the leadership of Newt Gingrich in the House and Robert Dole in the Senate, 231 Republican representatives and 53 senators will begin their task beginning Jan. 4 when the 104th Congress begins its new session.

Mr. Gingrich has promised that the first day will be "the longest opening day in history" and will begin the "100 days" to implement the so-called Contract With America signed by 300 Republicans.

The plan, drawn up before the Nov. 8 elections that routed Democrats and rocked the White House, contains the adoption of nine reforms, notably one that would require any tax increase to be approved by three-fifths of Congress.

The plan would also transfer from the federal government to the states social welfare programmes created during the 1960s which, according to Mr. Gingrich, have "created a culture of poverty and a culture of violence."

One of the first items of reform that is sure to be adopted is a constitutional amendment that would require the government to be



ONE-WOMAN EXPEDITION: Norwegian Travel Agency clerk Liv Arnesen (41) gives a thumbs-up while sitting on her sled in a single-person expedition in the early Dec. 25 morning hours, sending out a message "Finished South Pole" by a satellite phone (AFP photo)

### China to crack down on fake medicines

BEIJING (R) — China is to crack down on the production and sale of substandard and bogus medicines, some of which are toxic, the official China Daily said Tuesday. "Individuals and units found to profit from producing and selling fake or substandard medicines will be punished severely," it quoted state councilor Peng Peixun as saying. "All units which failed to meet state requirements must be closed and the situation must be rectified within a prescribed period of time or they will be banned from business," Mr. Peng was quoted as saying at a conference of pharmaceutical administrators. More than 80,000 cases of production or sale of fake or substandard medical products have been reported in China since 1985, the newspaper said. Some of the fake medicines were toxic, it said. Beijing will begin a national inspection of medicine producers and sellers early next year and introduce a new license system to regulate the industry, it said. Rural medicine fairs dealing in items other than traditional Chinese herbs must be banned, the newspaper quoted State Pharmaceutical Administration Director Zheng Xiaoyu as saying. The government plans to provide more medical trading centres for China's rural and transient population, it said.

### Crimes by China's spoiled children soar

BEIJING (R) — Juvenile crime in China soared in the first nine months of this year, much of it blamed on violent films, pornographic videos and spoiled children, the Xinhua News Agency said Tuesday.

"Crimes, especially serious crimes committed by the young, have been climbing significantly, with 70 per cent more relating to property and sex," Xinhua said.

The movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF), mainly representing ethnic Turks, won 15 seats with 6.25 per cent of the votes.

The MRF played a balancing role as the third major force in the previous parliament, helping to bring down the UDF administration in 1992.

The UDF coalition suffered deep splits, losing a

large chunk of its disillusioned electorate.

The third political force in the new parliament is the people's union, a coalition between the Bulgarian Agrarian People's Union and the Democratic Party, which won 16 seats and 7.5 per cent of the vote. The Democratic Party was part of the UDF until two months before the Dec. 18 elections.

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### 2 killed as Haitian soldiers protest

PORTE-AU-PRINCE (R) — At least two Haitian soldiers were killed in gunfire outside Haitian military headquarters Monday in the worst violence in Port-Au-Prince since ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was restored to power, a military spokesman said.

The shooting erupted during a demonstration by Haitian soldiers being sent into retirement under a plan to scale down the army, according to witnesses and U.S. military officials.

Ray Kelly, the former New York City police commissioner who heads the international police monitors in Haiti, said five people, all members of the Haitian military, were wounded in the shooting. He said he was unaware that any wounded died.

It was unclear who had fired the shots that wounded the five, Mr. Kelly and U.S. military officials said.

A spokesman at the Haitian military hospital in the capital said two of the soldiers wounded in the shoot-out had died. A third wounded soldier brought there from the scene was hospitalized.

The violence was the worst in the Haitian capital since American troops restored ousted President Jean-

Bertrand Aristide in October under a deal with the country's military rulers.

Under the U.S.-backed deal that restored Aristide, the army, blamed for many of the killings and other human rights abuses during three years of military rule, is to be restructured and sharply reduced.

"A bunch of them were to be fired today, and apparently they didn't want to go without a fight," said one American soldier.

Mr. Kelly said when the shooting began, some of the protesters broke into a weapons locker at the military headquarters.

When they emerged from the building, they were confronted by U.S. soldiers, who "fired back," he said.

More than 30 people were taken into custody, but it was uncertain how many would be charged, Mr. Kelly said.

"I think we have to let the smoke settle to see what this means," he said.

One witness, Patrick Ajenor, said the unrest started when two of the protesting soldiers slapped army chief of staff General Mondeir Beaubrun outside the military headquarters.

"Two soldiers attacked General Beaubrun. They

slapped him. He shot the two soldiers and they fell on the ground," Mr. Ajenor said.

That account could not immediately be confirmed.

Haitian soldiers at the headquarters then opened fire with automatic weapons, according to Mr. Ajenor.

Gen. Beaubrun's assistant was wounded as the general made his escape, he said.

An unidentified American soldier said some of the bullets flew across the plaza to the National Palace, where American soldiers returned fire.

Members of the multinational peacekeeping force in Haiti responded to the shooting, taking an hour to secure the headquarters. U.S. military interpreters used loudspeakers to tell Haitian military personnel to come out.

"If you don't we're going to come in the door and you could get killed. If you come out nothing will happen to you," the interpreters announced.

One of the wounded was airlifted in a U.S. army helicopter to a military hospital, said U.S. army Major Regina Largent, head of the Joint Information Bureau.

No members of the multinational force were wounded, she said.

Christmas twins have true seasonal bash

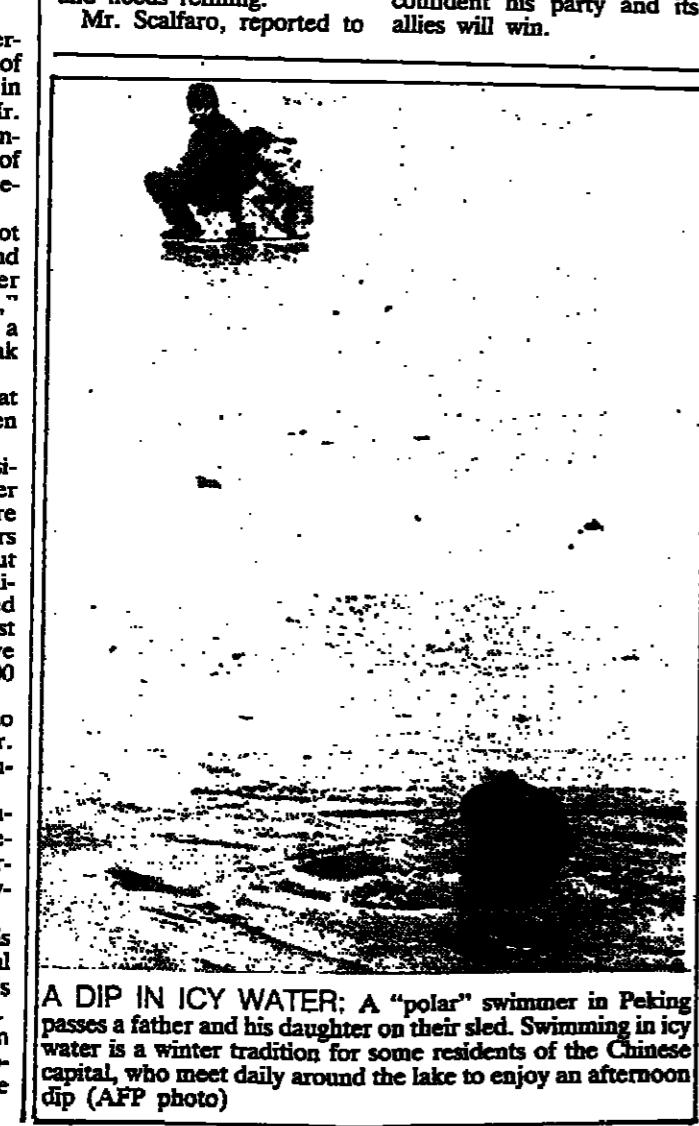
FLITCHAM, England (R) — It was a real seasonal bash for twins Lorraine and Levia Christmas, who were in hospital Monday after crashing head-on as they headed to one another's homes to deliver Christmas presents. The 31-year-old sisters, each driving her own car, collided on a narrow, icy country lane Saturday, the day before Christmas, police said.

Family members told British newspapers they were delivering presents to one another. "People always say the twins always do things together," said their mother Joan Christmas. "It is remarkable they crashed into each other this time of year."

"We did a double take when we first received details of the accident. We thought it was a practical joke," a police spokesman said. The two were being treated for chest injuries, whiplash and concussion at a hospital in Norfolk, Eastern England.

### Smooth sailing at last for QE2

NEW YORK (R) — The QE2, which left New York in a driving storm Saturday after construction problems turned its trans-Atlantic voyage into a fiasco, has finally hit sunny skies. After being delayed 37 hours in New York to correct safety violations found by the Coast Guard, the luxury liner was cruising the Caribbean Monday in weather described by the ship's radio operator as "lovely." The trouble-plagued liner headed into 50-knot wind gusts and 25-foot (7.6-metre) waves when its Caribbean Christmas cruise finally got underway Saturday. Many of the previous groups of passengers who crossed the Atlantic to New York last week found the trip anything but enjoyable.



A DIP IN ICY WATER: A "polar" swimmer in Peking passes a father and his daughter on their sled. Swimming in icy water is a winter tradition for some residents of the Chinese capital, who meet daily around the lake to enjoy an afternoon dip (AFP photo)



## Centrist, leftist groups gain from Rao's troubles

NEW DELHI (Agencies) — The resignation of a senior Indian cabinet minister gives India's leftists and centrist opposition groups an important edge in their struggle with Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, analysts said Tuesday.

As Mr. Rao grapples with corruption and growing dissent in his Congress Party, the resignation of Human Resources Development Minister Arjun Singh threatens the party's support from Muslims and lower-caste Hindus before crucial state polls.

Mr. Singh resigned Saturday, accusing Mr. Rao of betraying India's 120 million Muslims and not doing enough to bring the lower-caste Hindus into the national power structure.

Recent elections have shown the votes of both groups, traditional Congress supporters, are vital for any Party.

"Congress will be dead without the minorities and backward castes," said Welfare Minister Sharad Kesi, a close Rao ally and a shrewd party tactician.

He accused Mr. Singh of "deserting the battlefield in a time of crisis."

But Mr. Singh denied he was betraying the party or trying to split it. In his resignation letter, he accused Mr. Rao of watching silently as a Hindu mob razed a 400-year-old mosque in the northern town of Ayodhya in December 1992.

"This dark deed commit-

ted by vandals, inspired by religious fanatics, not only destroyed the structure but, in fact, seriously compromised the commitment of this republic to the ideals on which it was founded," Mr. Singh told Mr. Rao.

Ensuing Hindu-Muslim riots killed at least 2,000, mostly Muslims.

"It would be proper for the Congress Party to go on record publicly seeking an apology on this account," he said.

Mr. Singh also accused Mr. Rao of not doing enough to stop the exploitation of the lower castes and other socially-backward Hindu groups.

"We should initiate steps immediately to give them the levers of economic empowerment so that they also start acquiring a stake in the economic progress of the country," Mr. Singh said.

There are many areas of trade and commerce at the local level in which the labour of these sections of the people at the moment is mainly exploited."

Analysts said Mr. Singh's position was beginning to resemble that of the centrist Janata Dal Party. Newspapers said he was also likely to gain support from the influential Communist-led Left Front.

Left parties and left-of-the-centre parties may not be quite averse to joining hands with Arjun Singh as the issues raised by him, like reforms with a human face and regaining the confidence of the minorities, are also

dear to them," the Times of India said Tuesday.

It quoted unidentified ministers, who proclaimed their loyalty to Mr. Rao last week, as secretly approving of Mr. Singh's letter.

"I am with Mr. Rao, but how can I honestly say that the issues Mr. Arjun Singh has raised are not something that concern all of us?" The Times quoted one minister as saying.

Congress was trounced in recent state polls by the Janata Dal and its regional centrist allies.

Spurred on by the victory, the Janata Dal, which ruled India at the head of a minority government for 11 months from December 1989, was organising itself as a force in the politically important Congress-ruled Maharashtra state.

Any division of votes between Congress and Janata Dal could help bring a right-wing Hindu coalition to power in Maharashtra, analysts said.

The state is one of five due to hold assembly polls in February. Of these, Orissa and Bihar are ruled by the lower caste Hindu-based Janata Dal. Gujarat has a Congress government as does the fifth state of Arunachal Pradesh.

Analysts said Mr. Singh's revolt and the expected deselection of the Congress' remaining support among Muslims and lower-caste Hindus had made it difficult for Mr. Rao to stave off defeat.

Meanwhile the Congress

party is anxiously watching the window of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi as it grapples with a leadership crisis.

Sonia Gandhi, 47, is widely believed to be pulling political strings from her heavily-guarded downtown home in the bitter inner-party struggle aimed at ousting Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao.

Mr. Singh is known to hold Sonia Gandhi in high regard.

He met her at least twice before his dramatic resignation, and newspapers say he showed her his seven-page resignation letter, a virtual indictment of the Rao government, before sending it to the premier.

The Italian-born widow, who does not meet the press and has previously turned down requests to enter politics, has not commented on the reports. Her recent close-door meetings with Mr. Arjun Singh remains a mystery.

Political observers have been quick to conclude that Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, who is counted among the most powerful figures in the country although she holds no government or political post, may be quietly backing Mr. Singh.

Hundreds of Sikhs came from his home state of Punjab to the funeral, where Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian and Buddhist prayers were chanted.

"He (Zail Singh) was our pride. All of us loved him a lot. I would have even walked from Chandigarh to be at his funeral," said Autar Singh Grewal, a truck-owner who drove his vehicle through the cold night to attend.

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He faced a crisis in June 1984 after troops stormed the Golden Temple, the holiest Sikh shrine in the northern town of Amritsar, to flush out militants demanding a separate Sikh state in Punjab.

The president faced hostility from his own community, but feelings subsided after he played a crucial role in the withdrawal of the troops.

"His perseverance during that crisis period will always be remembered," said Rupan Singh, a member of the Akali Dal, a Sikh political party.

Mr. Kumagai was a minister in Mr. Morihiko Hosokawa's coalition cabinet, which made bureaucrat-bashing a byword, but generally failed to wrest policy-making power away from officials.

But whoever reigns on the political front, bureaucrats are likely to face further tough times, analysts said.

"Every politician thinks he can win political points by bashing bureaucrats," said one analyst. "It's a more dangerous, more difficult environment that they face."

Finance Minister

Masayoshi Takemura, himself a veteran of battles with ministry officials, backed the discharge and noted many other bureaucrats were less than keen about the reforms.

That reluctance is not surprising given that the public

can realistically take over the administration and govern," he said.

Analysts said another reason for the system is that the NFP was formed from nine parties, each with politicians used to being big fish in smaller ponds. The "cabinet" posts were carefully distributed between these former top dogs.

Financial matters will be handled by Takashi Yonezawa, former leader of the Democratic Socialist Party, and foreign affairs by Michiko Kano, former leader of the New Party Mirai. Takeo Nishioka, formerly head of the Kaikaku No Kai, will be senior spokesman.

Of the NFP's two former prime ministers, leader Toshiki Kaifu was chosen as "prime minister for tomorrow" and Tsutomu Hata will handle the hot potato of political reform.

The NFP was formed to marshal opposition forces to topple Prime Minister Tomio Murayama's unlikely coalition of Socialists, the conservative LDP and a smaller third party.

Its first aim is to force a general election for the lower house, not due until 1997, as soon as possible, something Mr. Murayama has said he will resist.

Meanwhile, life is getting tougher for Japan's elite bureaucrats as tensions between career officials and their political masters have flared into public battles.

Two top Mandarins lost their posts Tuesday in what some analysts saw as an attempt by politicians to assert control — or appear to

be want to show that we

## Bobbitt, Simpson topped 1994 media events

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Lorena Bobbitt, who cut off her husband's penis, and football hero O.J. Simpson, accused in the slaying murder of his wife and a friend, were the heroes of televised courtroom proceedings in 1994.

Simpson, a living football legend who converted his sports fame into a lucrative career making commercials and as a sports commentator, grabbed attention during his memorable June 17 arrest in Los Angeles.

Ninety-five million television viewers watched as an armada of California police cars followed his white Ford Bronco in a slow-speed chase along Los Angeles' highways as television crews in helicopters broadcast the scene from overhead.

The Simpson case became a media obsession as newspapers and television reporters ferreted out details about the life of the handsome, rich celebrity who was a symbol of American success and his beautiful wife, Nicole.

The former star of the Buffalo Bills football team is accused of having stabbed to death Nicole, 35, and a 25-year-old friend and waiter who was returning sunglasses she left at the restaurant ear-

lier in the evening.

Networks spared nothing in covering the events, broadcasting preliminary hearings live and sending star correspondents to the scene for a hungry television audience.

NBC's audience shot up 46 per cent from the week before, ABC 42 per cent and CBS 17 per cent. Coverage was not interrupted even for the launch of the Columbia space shuttle as business offices nationwide tuned in during lunch.

"Clearly, this preliminary hearing has generated more public interest than any trial in decades," said Myrna Raeder, vice president of the American Bar Association.

"There has probably never been a bigger opportunity for millions of Americans to learn the intricacies of their legal system."

With the enthusiasm usually reserved sports fans, viewers avidly watched as prosecutor Marcia Clark and defense attorney Robert Shapiro slowly revealed or tried to conceal elements to the murder mystery.

Viewers were given an inside look at the Simpson's marital strife, including a recorded call to police made by Nicole who was fearful of physical abuse as Simpson is

heard in the background yelling at her.

Where the television cameras left off, supermarket tabloids and Nicole's friends picked up, including a self-described close friend who published a book about her.

Even Judge Lance Ito, in an unusual move for a judge sitting on a case, succumbed to the allure of the media spotlight, granting an interview to a local television station.

"The worst sins of American journalism seem to be on display in the Simpson saga," The Washington Post said, noting the coverage of molestation charges against singer Michael Jackson and the Bobbitt pair in comparison.

"Nearly everyone with a link to the case, with the possible exception of Nicole's dog, has been offered money to tell his story," the Post editorialized.

The trial proper is likely to get underway in the first few days of the new year.

Lorena Bobbitt drew no small crowd herself. Some 200 journalists from around the world converged for the case of the 24-year-old maniac who said she was driven by an irresistible com-

pulsion to cut off her husband's penis.

Television cameras and satellite dishes surrounded the courthouse in Manassas, Virginia where the Ecuadorian-born woman said years of sexual and physical abuse drove her to slash off 27-year-old John Bobbitt's penis.

When CNN broke away from the proceedings to a news conference held by President Bill Clinton in Kiev, irate viewers flooded CNN switchboards demanding that the network return to the Bobbitt courtroom.

She was eventually acquitted by reason of temporary insanity.

Television viewers in 1994 also tuned into the murder trial of the Menendez brothers accused of murder for shooting their parents to collect the family's \$15 million fortune.

Lyle, 26, and Erik, 23, admit they shot their parents, but they said they were convinced their parents were going to kill them after years of sexual and mental abuse.

The first trial ended with a hung jury, but the next season of courtroom television will feature them again in a second murder trial scheduled to begin March 13.

## Indian elite lead Singh's funeral

NEW DELHI (R) — India's elite led thousands of mourners Tuesday at the funeral of former President Zail Singh, cremated according to his Sikh religion on the banks of the holy Yamuna River.

The body of Mr. Singh, India's first Sikh president, was carried from his central Delhi home to the Vijaygat cremation ground, close to memorials of India's founding fathers Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi.

Top officers of the army, navy and air force accompanied the body on its 11-kilometre journey, watched by thousands who lined the pavements to pay homage to a man who rose from a simple farming family.

Mr. Singh, who was 78, died in the northern city of Chandigarh Sunday after suffering multiple fractures when his car was hit by a truck on Nov. 29. A government inquiry found nothing suspicious in the accident.

Hundreds of Sikhs came from his home state of Punjab to the funeral, where Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian and Buddhist prayers were chanted.

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"It's a more dangerous, more difficult environment that they face."

## U.N. claims progress in Bosnia negotiations

SARAJEVO (R) — U.N. officials said Tuesday they were making progress in talks although operations in the Bihać enclave were jeopardizing the talks.

A seven-day ceasefire brokered by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter has slowed fighting significantly across Bosnia since it began Saturday.

U.N. officials want to take advantage of the truce to negotiate an accord for a four-month cessation of hostilities and a resumption of peace talks aimed at ending the 33-month-old war in the northern Yugoslav enclave.

But the latest ceasefire pact was not signed by Croatian Serb and rebel Muslim forces attacking government troops in the Bihać enclave.

The United Nations spokesman Alexander Ivankov told reporters negotiations were continuing despite public statements from the Bosnian government.

"We consider that discussions (with the government) are ongoing although at an informal level currently," Mr. Ivankov said. "We still hope that the position of the Bosnian government will not derail the peace process."

Mr. Ivankov said both sides had Monday with both sides had proved "positive and useful."

and the U.N. was preparing a fresh draft of a proposed cessation of hostilities accord.

Bosnian Vice-President Ejup Ganic said his government would not discuss details of a proposed four-month cessation of hostilities aimed at Serb forces from Croatia and rebel Muslims.

Mr. Ganic, who met Bosnian Commander Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Rose, said his government was demanding the withdrawal of Croatian Serb forces from the enclave and an end to alleged Bosnian Serb attacks as "the condition for further negotiations."

But United Nations spokesman Alexander Ivankov told reporters negotiations were continuing despite public statements from the Bosnian government.

Nine detonations were reported east of Bihać town Monday and a dozen shells or mortar bombs landed southwest of Velika Kladusa, in the north of the Bihać enclave.

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## Bangladesh walk-out deadline approaches

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## Time for new mandate

WHEN DR. Abdul Salam Majali took over the premiership in May 1993, his mandate, as was contained in His Majesty the King's letter of designation, included holding the 1993 Parliamentary elections, the strengthening of state institutions, maintaining balance between the three branches of government, reforming the civil service, safeguarding democracy and continuing the quest for a comprehensive peace.

During the past 19 months, Dr. Majali's government has worked very hard to implement the King's directives. In the course of these months, some of the King's wishes were fulfilled. The elections were held on time and were conducted fairly, albeit with disgruntlement by Dr. Majali's antagonists. But while state institutions hardly witnessed a change, the balance between the three branches of government went through stress and strain, especially when Parliamentarians accused the Cabinet of extending its power at their expense.

Generally, our democratisation process stayed the course but not without serious complaints that freedoms were at times curbed. In all of this, the government was able to achieve one very important goal, which is peace with Israel.

Here again detractors of the government criticise, attack and say what they want about the agreement and the role the prime minister played in engineering it.

In all cases, the supporters and opponents of Dr. Majali commend him for his integrity, sincerity and honesty. Yet many of them agree that his government lacked a vision for the future of the country and that even if it had one, it failed to articulate it and, at times, only made confusing signals about it.

Now that His Majesty has signalled that change was due, the next government, whether headed by Dr. Majali or someone else, needs to translate the King's vision for the future of Jordan in the new era into concrete steps of action at all levels. Peace in the Middle East, while it lasts, presents Jordan with a golden opportunity to direct its resources, both human and material, into building a modern state that can be a model for the Arabs to emulate. The new government needs to bolster national unity with new mechanisms, needs to reform government administration with seriousness and needs to plant new roots for a wider and more participatory democracy. Even more, the new government needs to engage and mobilise the whole people in an effort to carry a genuine and credible modernisation drive.

In order to do all of this, the new government needs to be not only visionary and strong. It will have to count on wide support in the country as a whole.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER in Al Ra'i Tuesday discussed Russia's involvement in the Chechen republic, expressing the view that the Western nations are gloating over the events there. Jihad Monani said that Chechnya was a new trap for Moscow after Afghanistan in order to drain away Moscow's remaining power. The Western world wants to keep Moscow embroiled in internal strife and in problems related to Russia's neighbours and so remove Russia from major world scenes, and belittle its influence in various parts of the world. The writer said that Moscow has committed a major blunder by being bogged down in fighting against the Chechens because the conflict would cost Russia a great deal and would further weaken the former superpower. Furthermore, the Russian rockets falling on civilian targets and killing innocent civilians would damage the credibility of the Russian regime before the eyes of the Third World, and this is one more objective of the Western plot, said the writer. He said that Washington and its Western allies are overjoyed over the developments also because they want to see Islam contained and restricted by all means.

MOHAMMAD KAWASH, a writer in Al Dustour, advocated the cause of the old pensioners, saying that they receive meagre pension not enough for their sustenance. The veteran servicemen and civil servants have the right to demand that the government do them justice and increase their pension after spending the prime of their lives serving their nation. He said it is only just and fair to give attention to those who had served their nation so diligently and faithfully but are now facing the rising prices and cannot find the means to ensure additional income sufficient for their mere sustenance. The writer said that it would not take a miracle for the government to come up with a reasonable formula to do the old pensioners' justice.

## Washington Watch

By Dr. James Zogby

## U.S. economic assistance and compliance with the terms of peace

WHILE THE Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) is expected to jump through hoops to qualify for limited U.S. assistance and support in the peace process, Israel receives unconditional aid in an amount that far exceeds the paltry Palestinian sum.

In addition to the annual congressional appropriation of \$3 billion (and hundreds of millions more in other defence-related contracts), this year Israel received an outright add-on grant of \$80 million to support Russian Jewish resettlement projects. This last amount is larger than the total U.S. appropriation for fiscal year 1995 to the Palestinians.

While U.S. aid to the Palestinians is conditional on the PLO's compliance with "terms of the peace process" as defined by the U.S. Congress (which literally translates to commitments demanded by the pro-Israel lobby in Congress), U.S. aid to Israel is exempt from political conditions and is even exempt from any congressional or bureaucratic oversight. In other words, the "accountability and transparency" requirements that apply to the PLO and every other U.S. aid recipient do not apply to the government of Israel.

In order to certify that the PLO has met the conditions of U.S. aid, the State Department earlier this month issued a report on PLO performance (combating terrorism, recognising Israel's right to exist, ending the Arab boycott of Israel, etc.). The report was generally favourable and so next week the U.S. president will almost certainly declare that the PLO is qualified to receive its 1995 aid allotment. What is troubling, however, is not only the fact that the burden of compliance falls exclusively and unfairly on only the Palestinians, but that the U.S. assistance once granted is so bureaucratically encumbered that the Palestinians do not really receive the full benefits of this aid.

Unlike the \$3 billion in U.S. aid to Israel, the \$75 million to the Palestinian is not given directly to the Palestinian national authority. In fact, Israel is the only country of all the U.S. aid recipients to receive direct cash grant. All other recipients have their aid administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID), and so it is for the Palestinian aid.

### U.S. aid to Palestinians

Of the \$500 million pledged by the United States at the October, 12, 1993 donors conference, only \$375 million was intended as direct aid. The other \$125 million was, in fact, loan guarantees (not loans) to support U.S. private investors seeking joint ventures with Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. The loan guarantees programme is one of the better U.S. international support projects since it provides risk insurance and guarantees for U.S. investors who use commercial bank loans to put capital to work in the West Bank and Gaza. Already, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), the U.S. agency that oversees the loan guarantee programme, has announced that they are working with five U.S. investors who have partnerships with West Bank and Gaza businesses. These first five joint ventures will take advantage of \$90 million in loan guarantees and political risk insurance. The \$90 million invested will generate over 4,000 jobs in the Palestinian territories.

Unfortunately, the story of direct U.S. aid is not so positive. While AID has issued its 1994 final report showing actual disbursements to West Bank and Gaza of \$75 million, almost half of that amount has not actually been disbursed. And of the amount that has been given, two-thirds has been in the form of direct assistance toward start up costs for the Palestinian Authority.

With the exception of the one aid funded housing project (which, after six months, remains a barely started foundation), the remaining millions of aid disbursements have been to the U.S. private voluntary organisation (PVOs) and some Washington-based consultant groups to provide studies, training and technical assistance either to aid itself or to Palestinians. The problem with these "technical assistance" programmes, of course, is that they do not create needed jobs or investment in Gaza and they have been designed by aid itself and awarded to U.S. contractors without any consultation with the Palestinian leadership.

For example, the \$11 million technical training programme to support the Palestinian private sector and small business development was rewarded to a U.S.-based PVO that has had no experience in the Middle East (they had received a previous AID contract in Russia).

On the other hand, since the Sept. 13, 1993 signing of the Declaration of Principles, the government of Israel has confiscated or sealed off almost 25,000 acres of Palestinian-owned land in the West Bank and Gaza. In addition,

Yitzhak Rabin government has continued to build housing units in the occupied territories at a steady pace. In what Israel calls "Greater Jerusalem" — which extends as much as 13 kilometres into the West Bank — the government has planned for the construction of 15,000 new homes (in addition to the 13,000 units started by the Likud government and now being completed by the Labour government). In the rest of the West Bank, the Labourites have planned or concluded another 4,000 new homes (in addition to the 11,500 units that were started by the Likud government which they have pledged to complete).

The Israeli government claims that the majority of the new construction is private and not government (in order to technically comply with the U.S.-Israel agreement regarding U.S. loan guarantees), but there is significant government involvement in all of this construction and, in any case, international law holds the occupying authority responsible for all such activities in areas under its control.

A number of human rights organisations have reported the continued practice by both the official occupation forces and armed groups of settlers to uproot, bulldoze or otherwise destroy Palestinian fruit trees. In just the month of October, for example, Al Haq (the Palestinian branch of the International Commission of Jurists), reported three serious instances in which settlers destroyed 558 dunums of Palestinian fruit trees.

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Equally troubling has been the impact of the closures on Palestinian trade and commerce. The closure in effect blocks Gaza and Jericho from Israel, Egypt, Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea. The results have been devastating. Unemployment has grown to 50 per cent. Exports have all but stopped and the Palestinian Gross National Product dropped by 25 per cent compared to last May. Reductions in employment result in reductions in tax collections, thereby denying the PNA needed revenues to operate basic services. This economic uncertainty in turn leads to a decline in private investment and the hope of creating remains unimplemented by the Israeli government. Among them are:

1) The safe passage between Gaza and Jericho is inoperative. ... The (Graecis) insisted on blocking Gazans who use the passage to Jericho from entering the West Bank. This is in violation of the Crossing Points article (on the page 20 of the agreement) which considers passage from Jericho to the West Bank akin to passage within the West Bank, requiring no permit or even an official crossing point. In effect, Israel wants to separate Gaza from the West Bank, requiring Gazans to obtain the same permit it requires them to have when crossing into Israel.

2) Palestinian political prisoners and detainees in Israeli jails and detention camps are still there despite the Cairo agreement requirements. More than six thousand of them are still denied their freedom.

3) The Economic Agreement is only partially implemented. Taxes and custom duties are collected by Israel. Rebates to the Palestinian authority are partial and delayed. It took six months to make Palestinian import permits acceptable at Israeli entry points. Palestinian exports to Israel face serious problems...

4) The Cairo Agreement's Second Annex requires Israel to submit to the PNA water consumption figures for the settlements in Gaza prior to the transfer of power to the PNA. Furthermore, it requires Israel to submit meter readings for every single well in the settlements on a periodic basis. This has not been implemented.

5) The same Annex requires Israel to deliver to the PNA a complete list of all the archaeological artifacts it had removed from Gaza and Jericho. It has failed so far to do so.

6) No progress has been made by Israel on continuing to deliver back to the PNA areas on the Beach of the Mawasi. No progress is made on the area of Jericho to be delivered to the PNA.

7) Four months have passed after the deadline of July 13 for the elections, redeployment in the West Bank, and deployment of the Palestinian Police. This is one of the most damaging aspects of the problems of the peace process.

8) Implementation of the Early Empowerment Agreement signed in August is not yet complete. Israel added a new requirement to the Agreement, which is availability of donor funding for the potential shortfall in tax collection in the West Bank. No such condition exists in the Agreement.

Any objective observer would note that Israel's failures to comply with terms of the peace process are greater in their severity than those alleged against the Palestinians. And yet, it remains only one of the ironies of the peace process that the burden of compliance falls exclusively on the Palestinians.

### Jerusalem: an example

An example of the ironies that abound in this entire question of compliance can be seen in the U.S. and Israeli positions on Jerusalem.

Due to the terms of the Israeli-Palestinian Declaration of Principles (DOP), the sovereignty of Jerusalem is to be determined in final status negotiations between the two parties. U.S. policy towards the eastern portion of the city (occupied since 1967) has gone through a subtle but significant transformation.

U.S. policy has long considered the entire question of Jerusalem as unresolved (since this nation like every other does not place an embassy in that city), but the U.S. has consistently maintained that the eastern portion of the city, including the large swathes of land to its north, south and west, to be "occupied territory." Since the signing of the Israeli-Palestinian DOP and the recognition of Jerusalem as a "final status" issue, it is the Palestinians who have lost in both policy and practice.

Israel has continued its closure of the entirety of the expanded and self-declared "annexed" portions of Jerusalem. Palestinians from the West Bank are then regularly denied access to the medical, religious, social, cultural and educational institutions of the eastern part of the city. Jerusalem, which was a multi-faceted centre for West Bank Palestinian social life, has now become, to them, a no-man's land.

The U.S. Congress and administration pay little attention to Israeli actions that are prejudice to the final status of Jerusalem. The closure and the expanded Jewish construction in the Palestinian areas around the city continue unabated. And while ignoring these Israeli actions, Congress has moved to forbid U.S. agencies or agents from dealing with Palestinian officials in Jerusalem — so as "not to prejudice the final status negotiations." Even OPIC loan guarantees are not applicable to any U.S.-Palestinian joint venture to invest capital in the eastern part of the city.

Members of Congress regularly join in Israeli expressions of outrage over PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's comments on the Palestinian intention to see Jerusalem as the cultural capital of a Palestinian state. But they ignore the repeated claims by Israel that Jerusalem is the undivided capital of Israel. Prime Minister Rabin himself has on a number of occasions stated his belief that "Jerusalem" will remain united and under Israeli sovereignty.

And in this context, it is bizarre that no one understands how odd it was for 279 congressmen to sign a letter to President Clinton in October in which they claimed: "We remain unwavering in our belief that Jerusalem is Israel's capital — and only Israel's capital — and that it must remain a united city under Israeli sovereignty." The letter goes on to state "we support the action taken by the U.S. Congress to prohibit any new offices or meetings in Jerusalem to deal with the Palestinian Authority. Jerusalem is the capital of only one country, Israel, and we urge you to implement a policy that does not in any way support a Palestinian claim to the city."

And so the question must not be asked, who is in compliance and who is not and, in any case, can the U.S. (as driven as it by pro-Israel sentiment) act as an effective and neutral arbiter on this matter.

## Why the Jews of the Arab countries left for Israel

By Pascal B. Karmy

North Africa as they could not live under the despotic and fanatical Spanish rule of the time.

In his classic book *The Gun And The Olive Branch*, David Hirst says: "Zionism had much less appeal to oriental Jews than it did to European Jews. In their vast majority, the oriental Jews were actually Arab Jews, and the reason for their indifference was simply that, historically, they had not suffered anything like the persecution and discrimination of their brethren in European Christendom. Prejudice did exist but their lives were on the whole comfortable and their roots were deep. They were nowhere more at home than in Iraq."

**"Thus anti-semitism was and still is used as double tool in the hands of political Zionists. It uses it abroad as a Damocles sword on the heads of those who criticise Israel while it manipulates it as a means to frighten the Jews to flock to Israel."**

It is true that the revolt and the troubles caused by the Arabs in Palestine in 1930's and 1940's against British mandatory power for allowing unlimited Jewish immigration to Palestine had their effect on the Arabs everywhere and consequently the Arab Jews were treated with suspicion. In Iraq some Jews were killed. But this pogrom was the only one in Iraq history and took place at a time of political chaos when the revolt of Rashid Ali al-Kailani was collapsing and most of his administration had taken flight as a British expeditionary force arrived in Baghdad. But there was no more such violence. By the end of 1948 there were 130,000 Jews in Iraq.

But the Zionists were still active in their midst and when the Zionists failed to convince the Jews of Iraq to emigrate to Israel they used bombs to frighten them to leave for Israel.

Furthermore, in order that Zionism may achieve the "ingathering" of Jews in Palestine, it encouraged anti-semitism and even persecution of the Jews in the countries

in which they were living. Zionism has from the start considered the Jews as foreigners in those countries. Even Herzl, the father of Zionism, himself was quite conscious of the convergence of anti-semitism with Zionism when he stated: "The anti-Semites are our most reliable friends and the anti-Semitic countries are our allies." Herzl saw the usefulness of anti-semitism as an incentive to Jewish immigration to Palestine. Herzl's Diary, which was published after his death in 1904 shows that in his contacts with and correspondence to prominent political leaders of his time, he was telling them that Jews were rebels and potential revolutionaries in the countries they were living in. In his contact with Tsarist Russia he asked Witte the Tzarist minister of finance to encourage the Jews to emigrate. Witte replied: "We encourage the Jews to emigrate by kicking them."

Thus anti-semitism was and still is used as a double tool in the hands of political Zionists. It uses it abroad as a Damocles sword on the heads of those who criticise Israel while it manipulates it as a means to frighten the Jews to flock to Israel.

The well-known anti-Zionist Jewish writer Alfred Hirschman quoted in his book, *The Other Side of the Coin*, what a Jewish columnist wrote in Davar newspaper in 1950 as follows: "I would send young men to the countries where Jews are absorbed in sinful self-satisfaction. The task of those young men would be to disgrace themselves as non-Jews, and plague Jews with anti-Semitic slogans such as 'bloody Jews', 'Jews go to Palestine' and similar intonations I can vouch that the results in terms of a considerable immigration to Israel from these countries would be ten thousand times larger than the results brought by thousands of emissaries who have been preaching for decades to deaf ears." Another Jewish writer, the American Rabbi Elmer Berger, testifies in his book, *Who Knows Better Must Say So* how the Zionists manipulated anti-semitism and used terrorism to frighten the Jews especially those of the Arab countries so as to force them to immigrate to Israel.

All the above proves beyond doubt that the Arab countries did not "expel" their Jewish citizens as alleged by Mr. Peres, but that it was Zionist terrorism and Zionist manipulation of anti-semitism that drove thousands of Arab Jewish citizens to flee to Israel, although there are still thousands of Jews living in the Arab countries mainly in Egypt, Iraq, Morocco and Syria. In this connection it is not irrelevant to mention that one of the advisors of King Hassan of Morocco is a Jew.

## Carbon monoxide kills 3

(Continued from page 1)

fire engulfed an educational centre in Misrad road, causing extensive damage but no injuries.

Capt. Share said investigations proved that the fire was caused by a kerosene heater.

"One of the employees we questioned said that while filling the heater it engulfed and the fire spread," he said.

It took firefighters one and a half hours to control and extinguish the fire at the Universal Cultural

Centre and prevent it from spreading, Capt. Share said.

Capt. Share could not give an estimate of the losses, but said that all the contents of the centre, including computers, typewriters, chairs and tables, were totally burnt.

It was the second fire involving shops in Amman in three days. On Dec. 24, an electric failure was believed to be the cause of a fire that destroyed a shoe store in Jabal Hussein. No casualties were reported in that blaze.

## Yeltsin orders continued attack

(Continued from page 1)

He emphatically ruled out any question that the mainly-Muslim territory would be allowed to break away.

"The longer the situation in the Chechen Republic goes on, the greater the destructive effect on Russia's stability. It has become one of the main internal threats to our state's stability," Mr. Yeltsin said.

He also emphasised that "the way to a political settlement is still open."

In remarks directed at army soldiers, officers and interior ministry personnel, Mr. Yeltsin said: "A clear objective has been placed before you: disarm bandit formations, get them to lay down or destroy their heavy weapons."

He said that armed "gangs" in Chechnya would be "firmly stopped."

"I ask you to make every effort to reach that goal and believe that you will," he said in his first speech since Russian troops were sent to Chechnya on Dec. 11.

"You were sent to Chechnya to protect the interests of the Russian state, the interests of all the peoples of our country. You are under the protection of the state, of the constitution of Russia and under the personal protection of the president."

Chechnya is "part and parcel of the Russian Federation."

"No territory has the right to secede," he said, referring to Chechnya's unilateral declaration of independence three years ago.

Mr. Yeltsin said the unchecked development of crime in Chechnya was threatening the entire country. "Your own family may (one day) fall victim" to it, he added.

Grozny was being sealed off and armed groups stopped, Mr. Yeltsin said, adding that Chechen borders were under control and "trafficking in arms, drugs and false money was stopped."

"Law and order will be restored on the territory of the republic of Chechnya," said Mr. Yeltsin, adding that Grozny "must be free of criminal elements as soon as possible."

Mr. Yeltsin said he shared Chechens' fears of a withdrawal of Russian troops before the republic's "many armed men" have been disarmed.

Mr. Yeltsin's spokesman said Vyacheslav Kostikov said

Mr. Yeltsin was primarily expressing support for the Russian military who were "carrying out their prime patriotic duty, which is not to allow the disintegration of Russia."

Mr. Kostikov said Mr. Yeltsin was aware of the fact that he found himself in "a very complicated situation."

Mr. Yeltsin was also "very concerned" before making his speech because of what Kostikov called "a certain misunderstanding of the situation in the mass media."

"Many people do not understand what is going on in the Chechenya, why we waited for so long, why Russian troops are acting this way," he said.

Mr. Yeltsin's speech will enable many Russians to understand the situation perfectly, Mr. Kostikov added.

Iran and Libya have called for a united Islamic stand to urge Russia to end its "massacre" in Chechenya, Tehran Radio said.

The call came in a telephone conversation between President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi late Monday.

The two leaders "deplored the killings in Chechenya, notably attacks on Grozny" and called for a peaceful resolution of the conflict as "the only reasonable way" to end the crisis.

They called for "a unified stand in the Islamic World to convince Russia to end the Chechen massacre," the radio said.

The Kremlin sent troops and tanks into Chechenya on Dec. 11 to dislodge forces loyal to separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev, who declared independence in October 1991.

"I call on you to do everything you can to fulfil this task and I believe you will do so," Mr. Yeltsin said Tuesday, directly addressing the armed forces. Armed bands who resisted would be crushed.

"Remember that the explosion of banditry on Chechen soil threatens our entire country. Your kin could be among its victims," he said.

"I want to assure all Russians — do not worry. Order and peace will be restored to Chechenya. We will take measures to avoid dragging out a solution of this complicated problem."

The Russian leader said Mr. Dudayev, a former Soviet air force general, was in power illegally and had launched an unprecedented crime wave against the rest of the country.

## Algerian crisis deepens

(Continued from page 1)

ties were "deeply shocked and overwhelmed and condemned the odious crime with the utmost severity."

It reiterated an appeal to French nationals to leave Algeria and said the French embassy had told Algerian authorities of France's "most serious concern."

France has voiced irritation at the attitude of Algerian authorities during the hijacking. Algeria turned down a French offer of police help while the plane stood on a runway at Algiers airport and only agreed to let the plane fly to France after Prime Minister Balladur, fearing a bloodbath, personally intervened with President Lamine Zeroual.

Foreign Minister Alain Juppé said after the hijacking ended that the bloody conflict between Muslim rebels and the Algerian government was likely to bring more violence against French interests.

France, basking in the success of its bold night raid, weighed urgent new steps to protect its nationals in Algeria.

Prime Minister Balladur called senior aides to an early-morning meeting to work out stricter security measures for French nationals in the strife-torn north African country.

Paris later said it would maintain a suspension of all

air and sea passenger transport to Algeria by French firms, announced on Monday, while deciding how to step up security.

Mr. Balladur visited some of the wounded, who were in four Marseille hospitals. Twenty-five people were hurt, none seriously, in the raid — three flight crew, 13 passengers and nine of the crack gendarmerie commandos.

One commando's fingers were blown off by a grenade, another was wounded in the chest and another fractured his thigh-bone, elbow and wrist as he leapt from the cockpit window.

The passengers killed in Algiers were a Vietnamese diplomat, Commercial Counsellor Bui Giang To at Hanoi's Algiers embassy, French embassy cook Yannick Beugnet and an Algerian policeman.

Algeria has been in turmoil since the government called off a 1992 general election that the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to win. About 20,000 people have been killed in the ensuing three years of civil strife.

Millions in France held their breath as live television showed the hooded, black-clad commandos attack the cockpit, where the hijackers were holed up, with guns blazing.

Paris later said it would maintain a suspension of all

## After the bullets, the tourist explosion

By Paul Mansfield

FROM THE air it's as if nothing has changed. The plane comes in low over Beirut at night, crossing a bowl of sparkling lights ringed by mountains on one side and the dark expanse of the Mediterranean on the other.

In the airport terminal there are sleepy officials and a few soldiers with automatic weapons. Only the bullet holes in the corrugated iron fencing hint at the damage done by 17 years of civil war.

Tourists are slowly returning to Lebanon. This tiny country of three million people imploded on itself in the early seventies, turning the former commercial capital of the Middle East into a war zone. Christians fought with Muslims, each side spawning myriad warring factions.

Other parties were drawn in — the Israelis, the PLO, the Syrians, the Americans, the French, the British, the U.N. — and most of them eventually withdrew licking their wounds.

By the late eighties Lebanon had become synonymous with car bombs, civilian massacres and hostages. Then, in 1992, with more than 100,000 people dead, a free election brought peace and the killing finally stopped. The infamous "militias" were disbanded and their members conscripted into the expanded Lebanese army.

Lebanon's new government has given itself 10 years in which to reconstruct the country. "Project 2002" is

already well under way and, astonishingly, it seems to be working.

Beirut, the former "Paris of the Middle East," bore the brunt of the war. What was once a palm-lined district of offices, shops and restaurants, is now a giant bomb-site. Ornate Ottoman facades are pockmarked with bullet holes. Buildings have been gutted by rocket and mortar fire. The wreckage goes on for block after block, a grotesque panorama of destruction. The bombed-out shell of the Holiday Inn still disfigures the Beirut skyline, a stark reminder of the bad old days.

But everywhere there are signs of recovery. New buildings are springing up, older ones being renovated or, more frequently razed to the ground and replaced. In the chic commercial district of Hamra I had breakfast of coffee and croissants at an open-air cafe and watched the parade of well-heeled shoppers in the streets. Designer goods are back in the stores: On the seafront battered old VW vans dispense ice cream to strollers on the Corniche.

Up in the hills, in the fashionable suburbs of Broummana and Bett Meri, the rich Beirutis still maintain their weekend homes, first-class restaurants and hotels have reopened. And at the resort of Jounieh, 20-km to the north, the "strip" on Saturday night is a blaze of neon. Outside Beirut it seems the war never took place. I

Like many Lebanese, Ali exuded a curious mixture of confidence and uncertainty. How had he survived the war? "We tried to live normally. We went out. We met our friends. If something bad was going to happen, we

would usually hear about it a few days before," Even civil wars, it seems, have a grapevine.

Checkpoints aside, the major hazard of Lebanese roads is the traffic. Lebanese driving is creative, in the broadest sense. When one lane is blocked, create another. When that's blocked too, create a third even if it heads straight into the oncoming traffic. Drivers flog their beaten-up Mercedes and BMWs down the pitted roads at suicidal speed or, a style that no doubt evolved over 17 years of dodging bullets.

The road to Tyre passes through some of Lebanon's prettiest scenery, rich farmland dotted with orange and lemon groves, and scented by wild flowers. At Sidon we stopped at the magnificent Crusader castle, and wandered round the vaulted souk, a medieval labyrinth of damp stone alleyways, where old men sat outside cafés smoking nargileh bubbly-bubble pipes (£1 a lunging go) and drinking Arabic coffee flavoured with cardamom.

The only evidence of war was the army checkpoints; a cluster of old tyres in the road, a wooden guardhouse, a few machine-gun-toting soldiers peering cautiously into the car. Many checkpoints are manned by the Syrian army, whose continuing presence the Lebanese deeply resent. "They are stupid people," said Ali, our driver. "But then they're still in our country, so I guess that makes us stupid too."

The mountains are dotted with vineyards and olive groves. Houses with red-tiled roofs cling to the steep slopes. In country towns young men in checked keffiyehs wheel overhead. We ate laban bi ajin — a sort of meat pizza — hummus, and tabbouleh salad laced with mint and parsley, and drank a bottle of red Ksara wine.

fiyehs hang around dusty squares, chatting. At Bcharre, birthplace of the poet Khalil Gibran, a goat was being skinned in the street, and a group of mini-skirted girls stood in the faded entrance of the Cinema Rivoli, now a kebab shop, with chickens on a spit roasting in the window.

At Hasroun we stopped for tea in a dilapidated café, where the owner, dressed as if for a night at the opera and speaking exquisitely Levantine-accented French, bowed gravely, brought tea, fussed with the table, and passed round cigarettes. It was a near-comic display of formality but it had a purpose. *Everything is back to normal now*, the manager was demonstrating.

From the mountains the road dropped down into the Bekka Valley, where huge dogs barked flocks of sheep and Bedouin tents sat by the roadside in a biblical tableau. On the valley floor, the ancient city of Baalbek rose like an apparition in the distance. Baalbek was named Heliopolis by the Greeks. Its magnificent ruins dwarf even those of Athens in size and splendour. The vast stone columns of the Parthenon and the Temple of Bacchus turned from cream to rose in the early evening light; pigeons wheeled overhead. We ate laban bi ajin — a sort of meat pizza — hummus, and tabbouleh salad laced with mint and parsley, and drank a bottle of red Ksara wine.

Baalbek, like the rest of Lebanon, is gearing up for a new tourist invasion: All the prices were listed in U.S. dollars.

In Tripoli, Lebanon's second-largest city, rows of money-changers sat outside their offices clutching wedges of banknotes. But even here, in the far north of the country, the war is never entirely absent. Down at the harbour wall the 15th-century Lion's Tower sits in the wreckage of a railway goods yard, alongside the derailed steam engines and bullet-riddled carriages of what was once the Tripoli-Beirut railway.

Back in Beirut we forged a path through the crazed traffic out to the airport, passing the remains of the American Marine barracks and the streets where John McCarthy and other hostages disappeared into the underworld of the civil war for years. Outside the departure lounge — repository of early-seventies chic — only a handful of planes was parked on the tarmac. Beirut once handled 100 flights a day — and if Project 2002 is successful no doubt it will again.

I chatted to a student who had lost both parents in the fighting. Her experience of life was almost entirely bound up with war. "I'm young," she said. "I'm 21. But here (pointing to her heart) I'm old." However, she didn't look it. She looked animated and optimistic.

Daily Telegraph

## Daughter's diary tells of Rasputin's glory

By Marianne Macdonald

An extraordinary unpublished diary by the teenage daughter of Rasputin, the legendary peasant with healing powers who was employed by the Russian imperial family to be sold at Sotheby's on Dec. 15.

The black exercise book, estimated to sell for up to £1,200, is a child's view of the momentous period of history shortly before the Russian imperial family was overthrown and murdered.

Marie Grigorievna Rasputina began the diary in 1914 at the age of 15 and confided in its ruled pages the story of her rags-to-riches transition from the rural village of Pokrovskoe in Siberia to the capital, St. Petersburg, after her father became a favourite of the tsar.

Rasputin had begun life as a Siberian peasant working the land, but his healing powers endeared him to the tsar, Nicholas II, and his wife, Alexandra, after they discovered that he alone could heal the bleeding of their haemophilic son and heir, Alexei.

But because Alexei's illness was kept secret, Rasputin's role was misunderstood. Rumours sprang up that he was a German agent, a member of an orgiastic sect, the lover of the empress and her friend Anna Vyrubova, and the man who influenced political decisions. He became known as the "mad monk."

His presence at court was hated by the aristocrats, but he was a favourite of Alexandra and Anna, whom Rasputin had helped to walk again after a train crash in 1915. Such was the gossip about



Rasputin in the Siberian village of Pokrovskoe with his children. Maria, who began her diary at 15, is at his right

him that after the February Revolution in 1917, Anna was questioned repeatedly about their relationship

before being found to be a virgin in a medical examination.

The propaganda against

Rasputin worked. But Maria's diary is written in the innocent language of a teenager unaware that in two years' time her father and the imperial family would be murdered.

"My biography: I was born in 1899 in the village of Pokrovskoe in the county of Tobolsk," she wrote.

"My parents are peasants, simple people. Our family consists of: father, mother, grandfather (my father's father), my brother, sister and myself."

"We all live happily together but sometimes I get cross with my brother and sister, but with my sister I get cross all the time. My father plays an important role because the Sovereign knows him and loves him."

Later entries describe how she played with the imperial children, Alexis and his four sisters, her school she was sent to and her crush on her tutor.

Rasputin was murdered in 1916, an act which was "the first explosion which heralded the coming collapse," according to John Stuart Sotheby's Russian expert.

In June 1918, Nicholas, Alexandra and their five children were murdered and Russia was plunged into anarchy.

Maria escaped to the West where she earned her living dancing in cabarets before moving to the United States, where she performed as a lion tamer in a circus.

She wrote a book defending her father and was last heard of living in California.

The Independent.

## How to storm a hijacked plane

MARSEILLE (AFP) — The elite GIGN troops who successfully stormed a hijacked Air France Airbus with 170 passengers on board here Monday had rehearsed the plan dozens of times previously.

However, the attack at Marseille airport counted as one of the greatest achievements in their history, involving more hostages than virtually any previous such operation.

As one GIGN member put it: "Inside an airplane is the worst type of assault operation... it's nothing but a tube, in which you can't move around. You can't see anything."

Their specific training

## U.S. looks to Asia and Latin America in new economic order

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The United States struggled to stay ahead of the pack in 1994 and into the new century by promoting multilateral and regional ties as a buffer to the growing economic might of Europe and Asia.

The keystone of U.S. policy aimed at liberalising world trade was when the representatives of 124 countries gathered in Geneva at the start of the year to end years of difficult talks by signing the Uruguay Round in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

That landmark agreement opened up hitherto protected sectors such as services and agriculture, slashed tariffs by 38 per cent and will engender \$200 billion in additional trade worldwide over the next ten years.

On the regional level, the United States was active on two fronts — Asia and the Americas.

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) grouping the United States, Canada and Mexico was born in January and in December

at the Summit of Americas in Miami, 34 countries pledged to establish a free trade zone by 2005 stretching from Alaska to Argentina.

The U.S. administration was also a motivating force in the summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in Jakarta when 18 countries including powerhouses Japan and China agreed to set up a free trade zone in the region by 2020.

With 800 million inhabitants, the Americas account for 29 per cent (\$6.8 trillion) of global industrial production and 17 per cent (\$1.2 trillion) of world trade.

The APEC countries with 2.08 billion inhabitants account for 52 per cent (\$12.2 trillion) of world industrial production and 41 per cent (\$3.1 trillion) of world trade.

This new-found U.S. faith over the last few years in the merits of regionalism reflects the U.S. economy's difficulties in maintaining its leading edge in the world economic system, said Jagdish Bhagwati, an economics professor at

Columbia University.

In the three decades that followed the end of World War II, the United States reigned supreme over the world economy, accounting for 50 per cent of industrial production and with healthy trade surpluses.

The current situation is a pale shadow, with U.S. industrial production cut back to 25 per cent of the whole and with chronically bad trade deficits, notably with Japan and China.

At the same time, the economic and social integration of western Europe has spawned a giant rival which currently accounts for 40 per cent of world trade and 28 per cent of industrial production.

"The specter of 'Fortress Europe' has convinced the United States that it needs to foster its own free trade zones with its own geographic peers.

The end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union also removed a key binding factor in trans-Atlantic ties of the last 50 years.

The same historic developments left an imprint in the Pacific where countries like Japan, reliant on U.S. military

muscle, are now less inclined to bend to pressures from Washington to open their domestic market.

The Clinton administration has made it clear that its priority in Asia is to finally slash its stubborn bilateral trade deficit with Japan, which topped \$60 billion in 1993.

These are the barriers forcing the United States to look elsewhere in Asia and in the Americas to redress the situation.

"We are not abandoning our efforts with Japan because we can't allow the world's second-largest economy to have sanctuary markets," said U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor.

"But when we look at the numbers we saw where the action is and it's in our own hemisphere and in Asia outside of Japan," he said.

U.S. exports to Japan are forecast to increase by 70 per cent to \$88 billion by 2010, but for the rest of Asia the increase will be much bigger at 163 per cent to \$248 billion.

"When corruption starts to gnaw at the foundations of government, then democracy itself ceases to exist," Mr. Franco said during the ceremony handing over the report, which was drawn up over 10 months.

Brazilian television, radio and news agency reports did not specify the time period over which the losses to corruption had occurred.

"The arm of the law must reach not only the poor but also the powerful," said Attorney General Aristides Junqueira whose office has been asked to investigate the report's findings.

Brazil has been rocked by successive corruption scandals since the December 1992 toppling of former president Fernando Collor amid allegations of influence peddling.

Earlier this month, however, the country's highest court threw out charges of corruption levelled against Mr. Collor.

Brazil has one of the world's worst income distribution ratios. Government figures show 21 per cent of the country's 150 million population earn just enough or less to survive.

## Brazilian corruption estimated at \$20b

RIO DE JANEIRO (R) — Corruption within the Brazilian government costs the country about \$20 billion and accounts for 40 per cent of the national investment budget, Brazilian media quoted an official report as saying.

"The Brazilian government has got to end corruption," President Itamar Franco told reporters in Brasilia after handing the report to his successor Fernando Henrique Cardoso who takes office Jan. 1.

Government investigators found officials, contractors and suppliers are skimming off roughly \$20 billion, mostly by deliberately overpricing existing public contracts and pocketing the difference, according to the report cited in the media.

"When corruption starts to gnaw at the foundations of government, then democracy itself ceases to exist," Mr. Franco said during the ceremony handing over the report, which was drawn up over 10 months.

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## Germany mourns father of 'economic miracle'

BONN (R) — Germany Tuesday mourned the death of Karl Schiller, the former Social Democrat who ranked as one of the fathers of the country's "economic miracle."

Dubbed "super minister" because he held both the economics and finance portfolios at the same time in the early 1970s, Schiller died late Monday aged 83 after a long illness.

Germany had lost one of its most important economists who had helped shape the German economic powerhouse, Finance Minister Thea Waigel said in a statement.

"He won great respect for his unerring judgement and his forthright advocacy of free market politics," Mr. Waigel said.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl said Germany had lost one of its greatest political economists.

"He achieved something remarkable for Germany at a decisive stage in its history,"

he wrote to Schiller's wife, Vera.

Schiller will be remembered most for his "concerted action" programme that brought industry, unions and government together to boost growth and curb inflation, a consensus-seeking concept that still shapes the German economic model.

The scheme, launched during West Germany's first post-war recession in the late 1960s, helped transform a country pummeled by World War II into the economic engine of Europe.

Social Democrat (SPD) leader Rudolf Scharping praised Schiller not only for his contribution to the party but also for the constructive criticism he never shied from making.

Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel said Schiller had been instrumental in pulling Germany out of the 1960s recession.

Born on April 24, 1911 in Breslau, Schiller studied economics and sociology. After serving in the army, he re-

turned to academia before entering politics with the SPD.

He shot through the ranks, making a name for himself as an economics expert and outspoken critic of the government of Ludwig Erhard, the Christian Democratic (CDU) creator of Germany's social market economy.

Named economics minister in 1966 under the grand coalition of CDU and SPD, Schiller developed his concerted action plan around what he called "the round table of collective reason."

He became "super minister" during the 1971 currency crisis when he was handed the finance portfolio. As such, he championed fiscal discipline but met fierce resistance from his cabinet colleagues under former SPD chancellor Helmut Schmidt.

He resigned in July 1972.

After retiring from active politics, Schiller advised clients like Ford Motor Co. and the Saudi Arabian government.

## ONLY THE FINEST DAJANI'S

GOLD & GEMS

Amra Hotel - Amman

## Egypt keeps subsidies to avoid 'upheaval'

CAIRO (AFP) — Prime Minister Atef Sedki announced Tuesday that state subsidies on the necessities would be maintained to any social unrest.

Dr. Sedki told Tuesday's edition of the evening Al Massa newspaper that the government would "continue to fix the price of bread and allocate subsidies to all the necessary social services to avoid social upheaval."

The government will allocate around \$1.3 billion in the 1995/96 budget to subsidise staple foods, Planning Minister Kamal Al Ganzuri said.

"The poorest classes will have nothing extra to pay next year, that's one of the main objectives of the 1995-96 budget," he said.

The budget for social and

health service would be increased by \$900 million to \$7.5 billion.

The government subsidies mainly cooking oil, flour, wheat and medicine.

The press here has noted price rises over the past two weeks which Dr. Sedki blamed on fluctuations on the world markets.

He also said that the government would not sell off any state firms lower than their estimated value. "We are not obliged to sell at a loss," he said.

The International Monetary Fund has criticised the slow pace of Egyptian economic reforms, particularly in its privatisation programme.

The IMF wants Egypt to halve subsidies and devalue the pound.

## Israel to lift all customs duties on imports from U.S. at beginning of 1995

OCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Israel will remove all customs duties on imports from the United States on Jan. 1, when the final stage of the Israeli-U.S. free trade area agreement takes effect, the treasury announced Tuesday.

The agreement, signed in 1985, established three lists of goods. Israel immediately removed customs on the less sensitive imports, which made up the first list.

It had to remove customs on the final list, containing the most sensitive items, 10 years later.

Israel is negotiating a free trade agreement with Canada.

## Western donors hail Kenya reform but still wary

NAIROBI (R) — Western donors have hailed Kenya's latest economic reform but questioned the long-term commitment of a government noted for policy U-turns.

The lifting of a ban on foreign investment at the Nairobi Stock Exchange announced by President Daniel Arap Moi was the latest in a series of measures grudgingly undertaken by Kenya since last year.

The move was a key demand by donors who underwrote annual aid of up to \$850 million.

President Moi said he would also allow private foreign exchange bureaux to

operate from January 1995.

The latest measures which ended all foreign exchange controls in Kenya follow a series of other economic reforms implemented by the government since 1993.

They include flotation of the shilling currency, removal of trade barriers, decontrol of the petroleum industry, deregulating agricultural marketing, closing questionable banks and strengthening management of the central bank.

"Both (reforms at the stock exchange and private bureaux) are positive steps. It is a logical progression," a Western ambassador told

Reuters.

"But donors and investors would like to see consistency and a sound track record which this country badly needs but desperately lacks presently," the diplomat added.

Another ambassador of a donor country echoed these views saying, "this country has earned itself a lot of mistrust. So our reaction is let's wait and see whether these are long-term measures here to stay or more pieces to appear us."

The donor concerns were supported by two leading critics of the government who are also members of the opposition Ford-Kenya Party, lawyer Paul Muite and economist Robert Shaw.

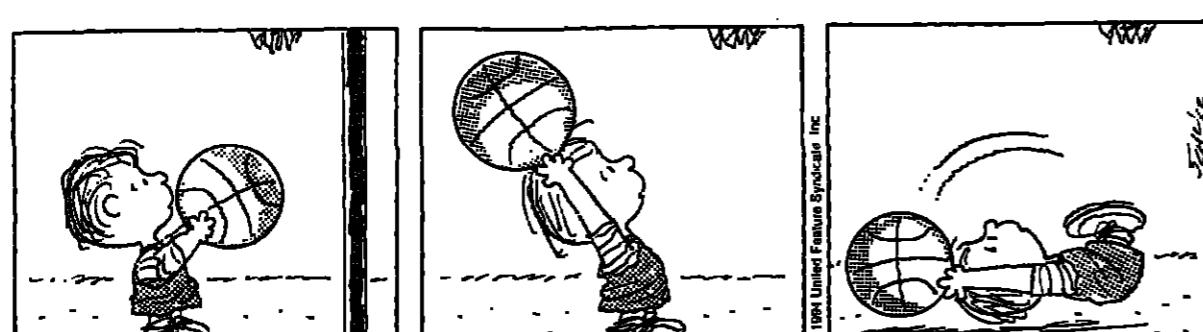
Mr. Shaw told Reuters:

"This government has gone back several times on major policy measures and that is a problem because none knows when to trust it."

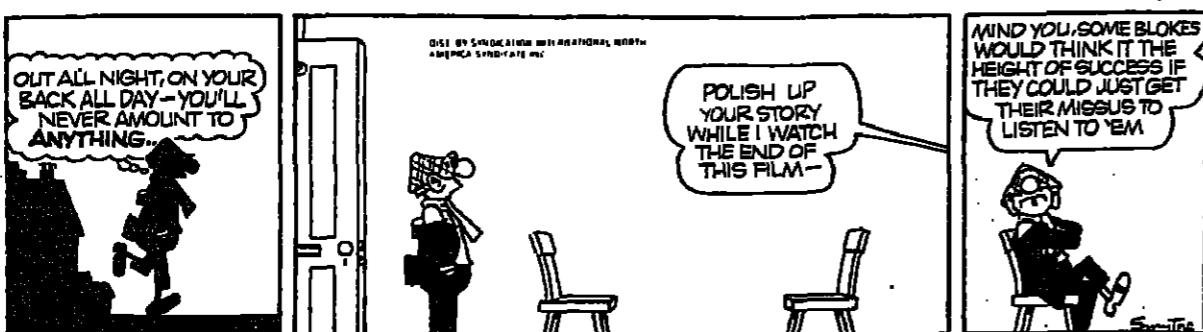
Mr. Muite said in a letter to donors: "We acknowledge there has been some notable progress in the reforms effected by the government but much needs to be done particularly on the details."

Mr. Muite said the government's policy framework paper on the economy had serious shortfalls. "The government has for instance liberalised the financial sector but it has not repealed the exchange control act."

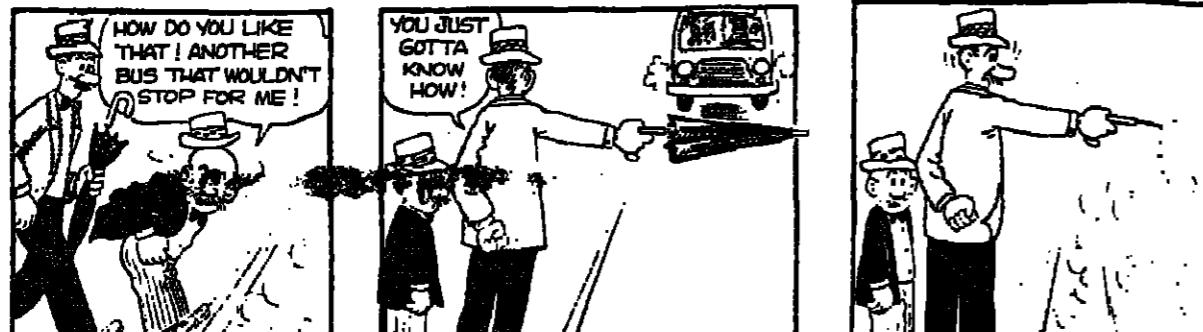
## Peanuts



## Andy Capp



## Mutt 'n' Jeff



## THE BETTER HALF. By Glasberg



"They say certain foods make you feel younger. Tonight we're having curds and whey with green eggs and ham!"

## JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

FORAV

GRABBER

VANEH

LIVERI

ROVEXT

IN

Yesterdays: DRAMA FUNNY STUPID SUZZER

Answer: When it came to commitment the confirmed bachelor was this — UNBUDED

Print answer here:  
A      
Jumbles: DRAMA FUNNY STUPID SUZZER  
Answer: When it came to commitment the confirmed bachelor was this — UNBUDED

## THE Daily Crossword by Don Johnson



ACROSS

1 Author — Orne

6 Meter —

10 Pitcher's rubber

14 Soap plant

16 A Turner

17 Instructions for

18 Sea nymph

20 Building wing

21 Network of nerves

22 Aster

23 Restaurant

25 Inhabitants

27 Jetty

28 German river

31 Chipper

## Business Daily Beat

A review  
of economic news  
from the Arabic press

### Steep prices prompt people to tighten belts

★ In his statement to the Lower House of Parliament, Supply Minister Adel Qudah admitted the fact that the cost of living went up by 5.4 per cent and that prices of food-stuffs have shot up by 13.7 per cent. Foodstuffs, including grain and by-products, poultry, meat, fish, dairy products, eggs, oil and ghee, fruits, vegetables, dry and canned legumes, nuts, sugar and its by-products, tea, coffee and other products, have become so expensive that purchasing them increasingly lowers the living standard of households. A supermarket owner said he knew many consumers who are cutting on their purchases. Another retailer noted that people were tightening their belts and that himself, for one, could not afford to have a diversity of food despite his dealing in foodstuffs. "If I am to enjoy three good meals a day, that will cost at least JD 10 if not more for a family," he explained, adding that was impossible because there were other expenses like rent, clothing, etc.

Other merchants point out that demand is high for lentils and other legumes which are still the cheapest. A confectionary manufacturer says his sales are down by more than 50 per cent, noting that his product is of least concern to the public amid the soaring prices for basic food. A housewife says her husband is a government employee and that his salary is barely enough for 10 days after paying JD 70 for rent.

A buyer at the Al Wihda vegetable market says 95 per cent of the people cannot afford to buy their needs of vegetables because prices are extremely high. "Without having to pay rent, we are forced to cut our purchases by half...I don't know how the people who have to pay rent could manage to live," he said.

A vegetable trader said that much produce rots because nobody buys at high prices. "Can you imagine that people are now asking for lemons we used to throw away." (Al Ra'i)

★ The Civil Consumer Corporation (CCC) will close its stores throughout the country for five days starting Wednesday, Dec. 28, 1994 for end-of-year stock taking. The store's markets will reopen on Jan. 2, 1995 (Al Dustour).

★ Since Thursday is a religious holiday, the Ministry of Finance will open all its offices around the Kingdom on Friday, Dec. 30, 1994 to receive property tax from the public. Failing to pay the tax (Al Musaqafat) by Saturday, the last day of this year, a fine that goes up to 50 per cent of the tax amount will be imposed (Al Dustour).

★ A court which is looking into a case of whether restaurants and patisseries should be categorised as industrial sector or service sector has sent an inquiry to the Ministry of Industry and Trade asking for its view. The court also sent an inquiry to the Amman Chamber of Industry to make sure whether restaurants and patisseries are included in its records. The Department of Customs has been after these businesses since the beginning of June to have them pay sales tax and more than 10 warnings, some carrying as high as JD 16,000 in penalty, were issued until the end of September. There are around 200 patisseries in Amman alone and the same number in both Zarqa and Irbid.

★ According to Amman Financial Market (AFM) Director-General Umayyah Touqan, one of the main reasons for the stock market retreat is the rigidity with which the liquidity policy had been applied in the market (Al Aswaq).

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET  
HOSTING BANK CENTER - AMMAN - SEMESEANT  
TELEPHONE: 660170 / 663270

ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST	FOR TUESDAY	27/12/1994		
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALVE PRICE	PRV. CLOSING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK	180	32805	182.500	182.250
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	19875	85976	4.360	4.350
BANK OF JORDAN	100	7640	5.600	5.650
THE HOUSING BANK	1200	7475	2.990	2.990
JORDAN KUWAIT BANK	2500	2842	3.700	3.550
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL BANK	800	11967	3.650	3.700
JORDAN TRADE BANK	3250	10305	3.480	3.400
BEST KUWAIT SAVING & INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	500	1545	2.900	2.900
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	119071	161458	1.810	1.810
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	4650	7831	1.680	1.700
<b>BANKS</b>	<b>152326</b>	<b>340610</b>	<b>INDEX NUMBER: 187.94</b>	<b>CHANGE: +0.032</b>
JERUSALEM INSURANCE	200	840	4.210	4.200
AL-NASR AL-ARABI INSURANCE	350	1680	4.750	4.800
<b>INSURANCE SECTOR</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>2520</b>	<b>INDEX NUMBER: 138.43</b>	<b>CHANGE: +0.028</b>
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER / NEW	12280	19178	1.520	1.530
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER / NEW	1500	2200	1.500	1.500
JORDAN IRON & MINERAL	1700	3706	2.080	2.180
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	450	2185	4.800	4.900
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	3900	12285	3.140	3.150
JORDAN PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	1800	4309	2.390	2.390
JORDAN GENERAL INSURANCE	24300	29015	1.190	1.210
JORDAN PRESS FOUNDATION / RIAA / T	16450	18050	1.120	1.120
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COSMOPOLITAN HOTELS	750	39488	2.390	2.390
ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	500	705	3.500	3.500
JORDANIAN EXPATRIATES INVESTMENT HOLDING			1.380	1.420
<b>SERVICES SECTOR</b>	<b>66715</b>	<b>150723</b>	<b>INDEX NUMBER: 132.15</b>	<b>CHANGE: +0.052</b>
ATTACKER CONST. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	2500	3120	1.280	1.240
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	3482	9993	2.870	2.870
JOHNSON PAPER INDUSTRY	1011	45855	2.500	2.540
THE JORDAN WORSTED MILLS	10100	7100	1.700	1.700
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	12950	66570	5.110	5.120
JORDAN CERAMIC INDUSTRIES	750	4800	6.100	6.300
ARAB CHEMICAL DETERGENTS INDUSTRIES	300	3617	15.600	16.000
RAPTA INDUSTRIES	1400	336373	16.200	16.240
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	450	1050	1.500	1.500
ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRY	750	5136	6.850	6.850
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	27750	25708	1.220	1.220
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	9400	13024	1.360	1.370
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRY	5000	20750	4.150	4.150
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	9400	26730	2.870	2.830
JOHNSON PAPER INDUSTRIES	448	4681	1.530	1.530
ALARIN INDUSTRIES	700	2680	4.420	4.420
JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MATCH/TIMCO	3050	2556	4.830	4.840
NATIONAL CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING	12500	66250	5.450	5.300
JORDAN SULFO-CHEMICALS	350	690	1.990	1.970
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	500	1390	2.760	2.780
WINTER INVESTMENT	6000	1050	1.780	1.780
UNIVERSAL MACHINES INDUSTRIES	2400	9988	4.150	4.150
<b>INDUSTRIAL SECTOR</b>	<b>146411</b>	<b>741073</b>	<b>INDEX NUMBER: 127.50</b>	<b>CHANGE: +0.030</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>368002</b>	<b>1234925</b>	<b>INDEX NUMBER: 143.49</b>	<b>CHANGE: +0.027</b>
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET	135280			
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET	180161			

Financial Markets in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets	
Currency	New York Close
Sterling Pound	1.5463
Deutsche Mark	1.5793
Swiss Franc	1.3329
French Franc	5.4525
Japanese Yen	100.12
European Currency Unit	1.2050
* USD per 1000	
** European Opening on 28/12/1994	

Foreign Exchange Rates		
Currency	Date: 27/12/1994	
1 MTH	3 MTHS	
U.S. Dollar	5.75	
Sterling Pound	5.68	
Deutsche Mark	5.00	
Swiss Franc	3.75	
French Franc	5.56	
Japanese Yen	2.04	
European Currency Unit	6.00	
Interest Rates	Date: 27/12/1994	
Maturity	1 MTH	
USD/DM	0.7030	
USD/JPY	0.7050	
USD/FR	1.0829	
USD/CHF	0.4444	
USD/SEK	0.5265	
USD/ITL	0.1288	
USD/JPY	0.6993	
USD/THB	0.3970	
USD/SEK	0.0428	
USD/ITL	0.0430	
USD/CHF	0.0430	
Other Currencies	Date: 27/12/1994	
Currency	Bid	Offer
Rahrah Dinar	1.5490	1.6220
Lebanese Lira	0.641330	0.642400
Small Riyal	0.1860	0.1880
Kuwait Dinar	2.3000	2.3600
Qatari Riyal	0.1919	0.1932
Egyptian Pound	0.2000	0.2150
Oman Riyal	1.5070	1.5260
UAE Dirham	0.1904	0.1917
Greek Drachma	0.2830	0.2832
Cypriot Pound	1.4050	1.5385

General Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin  
Date: 27/12/1994

Precious Metals	
Metal	USD/Oz
Gold	361.75

Date: 27/12/1994

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Date: 27/12/1994</p

## Jordan Handball Championship

### Ahli overcome Arabi; Orthodoxi lose again

By Roufan Nahhas

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Al Ahli kept the lead after beating Al Arabi 31/21 Monday at the Sports Palace after the 11th week of the Kingdom's Handball Championship.

Al Ahli/Al Arabi: Al Ahli played with confidence to keep the lead with 20 points after an exciting match with Al Arabi who withdrew in the 20 minute of the second half.

Al Ahli kept a tight defense to stop Al Arabi's Ibrahim Buhairi and Moufaq Fateh Allah from scoring. Meanwhile Al Ahli scored successfully depending on Hussein to

Ahmad and Issa Abdulla to lead the attacks and end the first half with 17/15 win.

The second half witnessed Al Arabi's withdrawal whose attack were blocked by Al Ahli's solid defense who kept the pressure to end the match 31/21.

Al Arabi stayed in the second place with 18 points.

Al Salt/Amman: Meanwhile in another match Al Salt beat Amman 29/20 to stay in the third place with 10 points.

Al Salt's Jihad Quishat successfully marched through Amman's defense opening the way to his colleagues Imad Tadros and Mohammad Al Hindawi to

score and end the first half 13/9.

Amman tried in vain to pass through Al Salt's strong defense while Al Salt were free to continue scoring to end the match with 29/20 win.

Al Orthodoxi remained last with 2 points.

Yarmouk/ Shouneh/

Standings after 11th week

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts.
Ahli	11	10	—	1	380	258	26
Arabi	10	9	—	1	302	258	15
Salt	10	5	—	5	298	295	10
Hussein	10	3	1	6	262	283	7
Y. Shouneh	10	3	1	6	297	331	7
Amman	9	3	—	6	219	250	6
Orthodoxi	10	1	—	9	261	336	2

\* Amman and Arabi have a postponed match.

## SPORTS IN BRIEF

### NSW Open organisers aim for Hingis

SYDNEY (AFP) — New South Wales Open organisers are delaying naming Jennifer Capriati as a wildcard for next month's tournament in the hope of getting Swiss teenager Martina Hingis into the main draw. The Sydney tournament, from January 9, is set to bring together for the first time 14-year-old Hingis with Capriati, the fallen teenage star in the second event of her comeback. Tournament director Barry Masters is keen to have both players in the draw despite having only one wildcard left after giving the other to Australia's Nicolle Bradtke, the former Provis. As it stands Masters will give the free pass to Capriati, who collected her last tournament title here in 1993 before personal troubles persuaded her to give up. Hingis will travel with her schoolbooks and mother Melanie, a former ranked Czech player who named her after Martina Navratilova.

### New York Ranger maced

NEW YORK (R) — Russian hockey star Sergei Zubov of the New York Rangers was walking with his wife and child near their home in Brooklyn when he was sprayed with mace tear gas. New York City Police said early Tuesday, Zubov, the leading scorer last season for the National Hockey League champion Rangers, was walking in the Brighton beach section of Brooklyn with his wife and daughter, who was in a carriage, when he got into a confrontation with several teenagers, police said. When one of the teenagers bumped into the carriage, Zubov, a six-foot-one, 200-pound (1.85 metres, 90 kg) 24-year-old from Moscow, told them to be careful, "whereupon one of the teenagers, Gilbert Rosario, turned around and sprayed him with mace," said police spokesman James Cole man.

### Roberts set to face Manchester United

LONDON (R) — Welsh international striker Iwan Roberts is set to make his first start for Leicester under new manager Mark McGhee against United at Old Trafford Wednesday night. Roberts came on as a late substitute and scored in the 2-1 defeat by Liverpool Monday after shaking off an attack of sciatica. McGhee tried and failed to sign Roberts two years ago when he was manager at Reading.

### Kin of boy died after baseball drills win suit

TOKYO (R) — A Japanese court awarded 48.7 million yen (\$480,000) in damages Tuesday to the parents of a high school baseball player who collapsed during a grueling practice session and later died of heart failure. Tsuchiura Nihon University high school and the school's then-baseball coach were ordered to compensate the parents of Hiroyuki Saito after the local court concluded there was a link between his October 1988 death and the practice session. Saito, aged 16, collapsed during repeated 200-metre sprints. He was

taken to hospital but died of heart failure. The school, 70 km (42 miles) northeast of Tokyo, boasts one of its region's strongest baseball teams.

### Salinas could miss Real Madrid clash

MADRID (R) — Spanish international striker Julio Salinas could be out of action for a month after injuring his right calf in a friendly between a Basque selection and Russia. The Deportivo Coruna star, a scorer in Spain's recent 4-1 victory over Belgium, now looks likely to miss the club's vital home clash with league leaders Real Madrid January 14. But he has not given up hope of playing. "At least my injury has come over the Christmas break," said the former Barcelona player. "I'm just hoping I'll be back in time for the visit of Madrid."

### Lack of snow hits Crans Montana race

GENEVA (R) — Poor snow conditions continued to disrupt the Alpine Skiing World Cup calendar as organisers were forced Tuesday to postpone the men's downhill race set for the Swiss resort of Crans Montana January 6. An International Ski Federation official said efforts were being made to switch it and other postponed races elsewhere, but unseasonal weather in Europe was making it very difficult. But snow conditions had improved enough for a men's giant slalom to go ahead in the Slovenian resort of Kranjska Gora January 6. It was previously scheduled for December 22.

### Former England captain May dies

LONDON (AFP) — Former England captain Peter May, widely-regarded as his country's finest post-war batsman, died peacefully at home Tuesday after a short illness, four days before his 65th birthday. May played 66 Tests for England from 1951-61 and scored 4,537 runs at an average of 46.77 with a grace that made him one of the most attractive batsmen of his generation. He was also England's greatest captain but surprised many of his contemporaries by retiring from Test cricket at the early age of 31 and from the first-class game two years later. May continued to serve English cricket in a number of important capacities — as a selector and later as chairman of selectors, as president of MCC in 1980-81 and as an active member of the Surrey committee. British Prime Minister John Major, a lifelong follower of cricket and member of Surrey cricket club, said: "Peter May was one of the greatest batsmen English cricket has ever produced. He played cricket and life in a way few people could match. "He will leave behind a legacy of personal and cricketing memories that many will treasure," he added. Test debut in 1951, against South Africa at his 13 test hundreds. His highest score was the 285 not out he made against the West Indies at Edgbaston in 1957. May captained England for a record 41 Tests, winning 20 and losing only 10. In his first-class career, from 1948-63, he totalled 27,592 runs at an average of 51.00 — a tally including 85 centuries.

## Paris-Dakar Rally to set off

PARIS (AFP) — Hubert Auriol, who won the Paris-Dakar rally in 1992 when it finished in Cape Town, will flag off drivers in the 1995 race from the foot of the Eiffel Tower.

However, for the second year running the first competitive stage is raced at Grenada in Spain January 1. The rally sets sail for Africa from Spain to miss Algeria because of the terrorist trouble there.

Auriol, now race director, won the rally twice on a motorbike before breaking both ankles in 1987 and switching to cars.

He has planned a 10,066km drive through five countries. The 14 timed stages on uncharted routes make up 6,169km and a speed limit has been imposed for driving through villages.

A satellite-linked computer the size of a shoebox on every car and motorbike will ensure no-one can do a Mark Thatcher. The son of the former British premier gained the rally international attention when he got lost in the Sahara 10 years ago.

### GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANIAH HIRSCH  
C-SPAN Home Movie Series

### A PESSIMIST'S PARADISE

East-West vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH  
♦ K 8 2  
J 5  
♦ 8 5 3 2  
♦ 5 4 3 2  
WEST  
♦ A Q 10 9 5 4 3 2 J 7 6  
♦ 9 8 7 6  
EAST  
♦ 9 10 9 4 3  
♦ Q  
SOUTH  
♦ Void  
♦ A K 8 7 6  
♦ A K J 10 9 6  
♦ Q J

The bidding:  
South West North East  
1 C 2 ♠ 5 ♣ Pass  
4 ♠ Pass 5 ♣ Pass  
Pass Pass

Opening lead: Six of ♦

Since nine tricks at no trump or 10 in a major suit score as much or more than 11 tricks in all a minor, clubs and diamonds are all but forgotten in duplicate bridge. The game published by Partchon is for game purposes. Partchon's rule is that minors are still bid, but the feature is that you might as well bid a slam in a minor rather than settle for a pedes-

trian game. That is not always correct. When this hand was dealt in a major national championship, those pain with four clubs (the suit majority) with their job done, bid clubs and diamonds. South reached five diamonds and even that contract needed careful play.

West did well to refrain from leading spades, instead choosing a low trump lead. They drew two rounds of trump, then cashed the two high hearts.

The defense tightly banked the lead, then continued with a third club for declarer to ruff.

Those declarer who view life through ray spectacles wanted to cash the two high hearts.

They did well to cash the two high hearts. Had both de-

fenders followed, the last trump would have been drawn and the hearts established with two ruffs. As it was West cashed one club, but could not ruff, declarer was able to ruff all three heart losers on the table and bring home the contract.



Washington Bullets' Calbert Cheaney #40 (left) gets ready to block New York Knicks' Hubert Davis

## Magic beat Bullets in overtime

LANDOVER, Maryland (R) — Anfernee Hardaway scored five of his 29 points in overtime to lift the Orlando Magic to their fourth straight victory, a 128-121 triumph over the slumping Washington Bullets Monday.

Nick Anderson scored a season-high 35 points and Shaquille O'Neal added 28 for the league-best Magic (21-5), who handed the Bullets their ninth loss in their last 10 outings. O'Neal fouled out late in the fourth quarter.

"I'm just happy to get out of here with a win," Orlando coach Brian Hill said. "The Bullets fought hard and did an outstanding job."

The Bullets have been without scorers Don MacLean and Rex Chapman for several weeks and lost forward Chris Webber with a dislocated shoulder last week. Centre Kevin Duckworth sat out with a sore right groin.

Washington forced overtime by erasing a six-point deficit in the final 88 seconds.

"I'm not surprised at the way they played," Hardaway said. "They were loose. Even though they only had nine players, they all go out and play hard. They outplayed us in the first half. But to win in overtime, without Shaquille, that was big for us."

In Cleveland, Mark Price scored 28 of his season-high 36 points in the first half when the Cavaliers built a 15-point lead en route to their ninth straight win, 123-102 over the Boston Celtics.

Price hit a club-record seven 3-pointers despite not playing in the fourth quarter. He was 10-of-16 from the field, 7-of-9 from three-point range and a perfect 9-of-9 from the free throw line in 27 minutes of action.

"I always think I'm in the zone, once I hit my first shot," Price said. "Sometimes I am, and sometimes I'm not."

Sherman Douglas led Boston with a season-high 19 points.

At Minnesota, Pat Durham hit a 3-pointer with 22 seconds left, lifting the Timberwolves to an 82-81 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers in a meeting of the league's worst teams.

"We are the Timberwolves," said Durham, who scored eight points. "We don't rely on artistic performances. We'll take every win we can get, it doesn't matter."

Christian Laettner capped his season-high 26-point performance with two free throws in the closing seconds for Minnesota, which played without leading scorer Isaiah Rider and won for just the sixth time in 25 games.

The team suspended Rider for one game for missing the morning practice.

Loy Vaught scored 20 points to pace the Clippers, who dropped their fifth straight and are a league-worst 3-23.

In Portland, Clarence Weatherspoon scored 21 of his 23 points in the second half, including the go-ahead basket with 1:17 to go, as the Philadelphia 76ers beat the Trail Blazers 101-94.

Dana Barros also scored 23 points and added 10 assists for the Sixers, who had lost five straight to Portland.

Rod Strickland had 26 points, nine rebounds and nine assists for Portland. Clyde Drexler added 25 points.

In Milwaukee, Eric Murock came off the bench to score five of his 14 points during a decisive 13-1 third-quarter run as the Bucks snapped a four-game losing streak with a 101-97 victory over the New Jersey Nets.

Vin Baker led the Bucks with 26 points and Glenn Robinson added 25.

Chris Morris scored a season-high 28 points and Kenny Anderson added 23 and 12 assists for the Nets, who cut the deficit to two in the fourth quarter but could get no closer.

In Phoenix, Kevin Johnson scored 20 points and Charles Barkley and Dan Majerle added 19 apiece to lead eight scorers in double figures as the Suns extended their franchise-record home winning streak to 25 games with a 139-113 rout of the Dallas Mavericks.

The Suns improved to 14-0 at home this season and own the best record in the Western Conference at 20-6.

Barkley also had 12 rebounds and had eight assists.

Jim Jackson scored a game-high 28 points and Jamal Mashburn added 21 for the Mavs, who lost their third straight.

The Bullets have been without scorers Don MacLean and Rex Chapman for several weeks and lost forward Chris Webber with a dislocated shoulder last week. Centre Kevin Duckworth sat out with a sore right groin.

Washington forced overtime by erasing a six-point deficit in the final 88 seconds.

"I'm not surprised at the way they played," Hardaway said. "They were loose. Even though they only had nine players, they all go out and play hard. They outplayed us in the first half. But to win in overtime, without Shaquille, that was big for us."

In Seattle, Sam Perkins poured in a season-high 26 points and Detlef Schrempf scored 12 of his 21 points in the first quarter as the SuperSonics routed the Sacramento Kings 123-103 to extend their home winning streak to 12 straight.

The Sonics won their 12th in 14 games.

Chris Grant scored 23 points for the Kings, who trailed throughout.

In Miami, Hakeem Olajuwon had 24 points and 12 rebounds and Mario Elie scored 19 points, including his team's first 11 points of the fourth quarter, as the Houston Rockets beat the Heat 101-88.

Knicks' Oakley to have surgery

New York Knicks All-Star forward Charles Oakley will undergo surgery to correct a congenital dislocation of his second right toe.

Oakley is expected to be sidelined four to eight weeks — more bad news for the Eastern Conference champion Knicks who are struggling this season with a five-game losing streak and a mediocre 12-12 record.

"It's just too much," Oakley said of the pain in his toe after scoring 20 points in New York's 107-104 loss in Chicago Christmas Day. "I might as well get it over with."

The 31-year-old Oakley

## Vikings end 49ers' winning streak to take NFC Central title

MINNEAPOLIS (R) — The Minnesota Vikings, with more at stake but without their top quarterback, won the NFC Central division title with a 21-14 victory over the league-leading San Francisco 49ers Monday night.

Dewayne Washington returned a fumble 18 yards for a touchdown and Fuad Reveiz kicked two field goals as the Vikings (10-6), who rested injured quarterback Warren Moon, won their second division title in three years. They will host the Chicago Bears in a wild-card-round playoff game Sunday.

Sean Salisbury, who had not taken a snap this season, started in place of Moon.

The 49ers (13-3), who had already clinched the NFC West and home field advantage throughout the entire playoffs, saw their 10-game winning streak come to an end.

San Francisco benched starting quarterback Steve Young and receivers Jerry Rice and John Taylor early in the second quarter and lost for the first time since October 2, against Philadelphia.

"I think it was the longest quarter of my coaching experience, the way Steve was taking those shots," San Francisco coach George Seifert said.

"I hate games like this," said Rice. "I felt I was getting into a groove and then I sat down."

Salisbury completed 16-of-34 passes for 156 yards. His 38-yard pass to Qadry Ismail set up a one-yard touchdown run by Terry Allen that gave Minnesota a 21-7 lead with nine seconds left in the third quarter.

"I'm just grateful I got a chance, and guys stuck with me," Salisbury said.

"Sean Salisbury did a solid job," Green said. "I think any time you go out and do your job as a backup quarterback, it's to operate the offense, get the team in the end zone, any chance you can, try to win the ballgame. It was his first opportunity this year and he did a good job."

Washington picked up a fumble by Ricky Winters and scooted 17 yards for a touchdown with 10:07 left in the first quarter to give Minnesota a 7-0 lead.

"I just happened to be in the right place at the right time," said Washington, who tied the rookie record for touchdowns by a defensive player with three. "I'm glad things worked out for me."

Revez kicked field goals of 48 and 27 yards, extending his streak of consecutive field goals to 28, one behind the record set by John Carney of the San Diego Chargers in 1993.

Revez kicked field goals of 48 and 27 yards, extending his streak of consecutive field goals to 28, one behind the record set by John Carney of the San Diego Chargers in 1993.

Young completed 12-of-13 passes for 84 yards, including a six-yard touchdown toss to Rice on the first play of the second quarter that tied it, 7-7.

It was the 139th career touchdown for Rice, who caught four passes for 33 yards to move one past Steve Largent into second place on the all-time receptions list with 820. Art Monk of the New York Jets is the all-time leader with 934.

Revez kicked a 48-yard field goal on the final play of the first half to give Minnesota the lead for good at 10-7. He added a 27-yarder midway through the third period to boost the lead to 13-7.

Revez tied Chuck Foreman's 1975 club record for points in a season with 132.

Minnesota receiver Cris Carter caught three passes for 24 yards, extending his NFL single-season receptions record to 132.

Allen ran for the two-point conversion after his touchdown to give the Vikings a 14-point lead.

Elvis Grbac, who replaced Young in the second quarter, threw a one-yard touchdown pass to Ed McCaffrey with 3:53 remaining. Grbac was 18-of-23 for 184 yards and one interception.

Green was optimistic Moon would be ready next week.

"We're hopeful that the progress Warren Moon has made last week, he'll make the same kind of progress this week," Green said. "If he does, there is a good chance he will be able to play Sunday."

Asked if he would be ready should Moon still be sidelined, Salisbury said: "Have to. If he plays it's just a feather in our cap, because

he had such a wonderful year. If he isn't, I have the responsibility to my teammates and myself to be ready for it."

### Eagles fire head coach

The Philadelphia Eagles fired Rich Kotite as head coach Monday.

No successor was named, but Dick Vermeil, the only coach to take the Eagles to the Super Bowl, has been reported to be considering returning to the team he quit 12 years ago due to "burn-out."

Eagles owner Jeffrey Lurie met with Kotite Monday morning and then said they mutually decided to part ways.

"Rich Kotite and the Philadelphia Eagles have decided to part company," Lurie said at a news conference at Veterans Stadium.

"Rich Kotite will no longer be the head coach of the Philadelphia Eagles. All aspects of his contract will be honoured. He is free to pursue head coaching opportunities."

Kotite has been mentioned as a candidate for the head coaching job with the expansion Carolina Panthers.

"Coaches are hired to be fired," said Kotite, who had a year left on his contract. "I

don't know if I agree with that but I have the warmest feelings for everybody in this organization."

Kotite has been under fire since the middle of the season, even when the Eagles were 7-2 and contending for first place in the NFC East.

The Eagles skidded down the stretch, losing their last seven games to fall out of the playoff picture at 7-9.

The Philadelphia Inquirer reported Sunday that Vermeil is considering an offer from Lurie to serve as the team's general manager or general manager and coach.

According to the Inquirer, the 58-year-old Vermeil met for three hours with Lurie Friday.

"I went into the meeting without an interest, and I came out of the meeting with an interest," Vermeil told the newspaper. "We discussed the possibilities of general manager or general manager and coach."

Vermeil, who coached the Eagles from 1976 through 1982, said he and Lurie agreed to consider the offer for a week or two before making a decision.

Vermeil, college football analyst for ABC Sports, compiled a 54-47 record with the Eagles and guided the team to Super Bowl 15, where they were beaten by the Oakland Raiders 27-10.

### NFL Standings

#### American Football Conference

##### Eastern Division

	W	L	T	PF	PA
Miami (Y)	10	6	0	389	327
New England (X)	10	6	0	351	312
Indianapolis	8	8	0	307	320
Buffalo	7	9	0	340	356
NY Jets	6	10	0	264	320

##### Central Division

	W	L	T	PF	PA
Pittsburgh (Y)	12	4	0	316	234
Cleveland (X)	11	5	0	340	204
Cincinnati	3	13	0	276	406
Houston	2	14	0	226	352

##### Western Division

	W	L	T	PF	PA
San Diego (Y)	11	5	0	381	306
Kansas City (X)	9	7	0	319	298
La Raiders	9	7	0	303	327
Denver	7	9	0	347	396
Seattle	6	10	0	287	323

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Manchester United's Eric Cantona (centre) tries to keep control of the ball as he is blocked by two defenders (AFP photo)

## Blackburn end United's shortlived joy

LONDON (AFP) — Blackburn Rovers made a quick return to the top of the English Premiership Monday night with a 3-1 win at Manchester City after reigning champions Manchester United had led the table for just seven hours following a 3-2 victory at Chelsea earlier in the day.

Rovers, without manager Kenny Dalglish who is recovering from an appendix operation, took the lead early in a frenetic first half through Alan Shearer's 20th goal of the season.

Mark Atkins put them further front before Niall Quinn reduced the deficit with a trademark header after just 20 minutes.

But any hope of a City fightback were killed off midway through a dull second-half when England full-back Graham Le Saux curled a brilliant free-kick from 25 yards over the defensive wall and beyond the helpless reach of Andy Dibble.

Manchester United, beaten twice in the league by Glenn Hoddle's side last sea-

son, appeared to be cruising to a comfortable victory at Stamford Bridge after a Mark Hughes goal and an Eric Cantona penalty had put them in front.

But a penalty by Scottish international John Spencer and Eddie Newton's first goal for two years 12 minutes from time set up the possibility of a thrilling reversal. But only for a minute.

While Chelsea were still celebrating their remarkable comeback, Irish international Roy Keane broke free on the left and set up Brian McClair who swept in his first league goal for 14 weeks.

Chelsea, though, refused to accept defeat and only a superb save from Gary Walsh minutes from the end from substitute Mark Stein kept United in front.

United manager Alex Ferguson was clearly relieved that his side emerged from Chelsea's second-half assault with all three points.

"It nearly turned into a disaster, which I couldn't envisage at 2-0 up. In the first half, we were superb, and

maybe getting the penalty so early in the second half caused us to relax and get careless," he said.

As speculation mounts about his possible transfer to Nottingham Forest in exchange for the younger Stan Collymore, Mark Hughes ensured a timely reminder of his value to United.

The veteran Welshman, whose age and nationality may make him surplus to Alex Ferguson's requirements in rebuilding a side capable of challenging for European honours, opened the scoring with a typically bullish effort.

With perfect timing he slid into the box to meet Ryan Giggs' lofted cross for his first league goal in two months and only his fourth of the season.

United's lead seconds after the break after Keane was crudely challenged by Frank Sinclair before Gary Pallister's equally bovine treatment of Stein allowed Spencer to blast home from the penalty spot.

Newton's far-post header looked to have sealed a superb fightback by the Londoners before the efforts of Keane and McClair ensured that Chelsea's joy was only short-lived.

Liverpool keeper

David James saved a penalty and pulled off a superb injury-time save to help the Merseysiders to a 2-1 victory at lowly Leicester.

James saved Steve Thompson's 63rd minute spotkick, after John Barnes had tripped Lee Philpott inside the box, and then only seconds from the final whistle spread himself to keep out a point-blank effort from Mark Blake.

Four minutes later Liverpool took the lead through a Robbie Fowler penalty, after John Scales was pushed inside the box.

The Merseysiders extended their lead on 77 minutes, when Fowler's lofted cross for Ian Rush to prod home at the 'Rush' and only his fourth of the season.

Cantona stretched United's lead seconds after the break after Simon Grayson was sent off for his second booking in a goalless encounter at Leeds but despite a far greater share of possession and goal opportunities they failed to capitalise.

Two goals from Guy Whit-

tingham on his Sheffield Wednesday debut and one apiece from Mark Bright and the Swede Klas Ingesson — his first for the club — put an end to Joe Royle's eight-match unbeaten start as Everton manager.

Duncan Ferguson, playing his first game since his £4 million move from Glasgow Rangers, put Everton ahead before the Merseysiders were overrun.

Nottingham Forest also had to be satisfied with a 0-0 draw, at Coventry, after skipper Stuart Pearce hit the crossbar with a 20th-minute penalty.

Tottenham enjoyed their first away win under Gerry Francis with a 2-0 win at Norwich in a game that they should have won by a far greater margin.

Nick Barmby set Spurs on their way after 11 minutes when he swept home Darren Anderson's cross from 10 yards and though

## NEWS IN BRIEF

## UAE's federal advisory council reconvenes

ABU DHABI (R) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) reconvened its consultative Federal National Council (FNC) on Tuesday, the official Emirates news agency reported. The 40-member FNC is made up of nominees by the UAE's seven emirates. It usually convenes towards the end of the year and its last full session was last summer, an official said. The FNC, which has equivalents in other Gulf Arab states, meets in public and examines draft laws before they are ratified by the UAE's president, Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahyan. It has no power of veto but when it is in session it can call on ministers to reconsider draft laws and make amendments. The FNC was set up in 1972, shortly after the formation of the UAE from what were previously British protectorates.

## Tanker captain awaits UAE collision report

ABU DHABI (R) — The captain of an oil tanker ruptured in a collision with another ship in March is being kept in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) until investigators report on the accident, a British official said on Tuesday. Lau Chung-Hui, 45, has had his British passport taken away and is not allowed to leave the UAE, said Trevor Lewis, third secretary at the British embassy in Dubai. He is staying in a hotel in Dubai, waiting for the report to be made to the prosecutor in the UAE emirate of Fujairah. Captain Lau was master of the Seki, a Panama-registered supertanker which shed thousands of tonnes of oil into the sea off Fujairah after a collision with the smaller UAE-owned Baynunah in March. "We hope [the prosecutor] makes a positive decision and Captain Lau is released soon," Mr. Lewis told Reuters by telephone. Mr. Lewis said he did not know when the investigators might submit their report and added: "We hope it's soon." The government of Fujairah could claim damages if one of the parties is found responsible for the accident, which led to oil from the Seki washing ashore and blackening a stretch of Indian Ocean coastline. Both ships have been repaired since the accident and are sailing again, a shipping source said.

## Thieves of Baghdad rob ambassador's house

BAGHDAD (R) — Thieves handcuffed an Asian ambassador and burglarised his Baghdad house days after he fled a previous raid and threatened to close his embassy unless the government provided protection, a newspaper said on Tuesday. Babel, the paper run by President Saddam Hussein's eldest son Uday, did not give the diplomat's name or nationality. "The house of an Asian ambassador came under armed assault but he managed to flee through the window and head for the Foreign Ministry asking for protection for his house," the paper reported. It said the diplomat threatened to close the embassy and leave for his home country if protection was not provided. But after some days, while he was still waiting for protection, armed thieves struck again, handcuffed and gagged him and burglarised his house, the paper said. It gave no further details.

## Indonesia to send 180,000 pilgrims to S. Arabia

JAKARTA (R) — Indonesia, home to the world's largest Muslim population, plans to send 180,000 people to Saudi Arabia next year on the annual Haj pilgrimage, Transportation Minister Haryanto Danuri told on Tuesday. Mr. Danuri told reporters after meeting President Suharto the number who had registered for the trip was higher than this year's 163,000 pilgrims. "We need 24 charter airplanes to carry those people, we already have an agreement for 13 airplanes," he said. About 350 Indonesians died on the pilgrimage in 1994, mostly because of illness. Five others were killed during a stampede near Mecca.

## Mufti to denounce terrorism on U.S. visit

CAIRO (AFP) — The mufti of Egypt, Sheikh Sayyed Tantawi, will give talks on Islam's rejection of terrorism during a 10-day visit to the United States beginning on Monday, the government daily Al Ahram reported. The mufti is known for his moderate views, in contrast with the imam of Al Azhar, the highest Sunni Muslim authority, Sheikh Gad Al Hafiz Ali Haq. The mufti, who has been invited by the Anglican Church, will attend a series of seminars under the theme "Islam and Peace" and will talk about "Islam's rejection of terrorism," the daily said. Around 540 people have died since militants began a campaign in March 1992 aimed at overthrowing the Egyptian government.

## 1 killed, another injured in Tehran bank raid

TEHRAN (AFP) — Two gunmen attacked a bank in the Iranian capital, fatally wounding the security guard and injuring a female employee, official sources said Tuesday. The attack occurred Monday on a branch of the Bank-e-Melli (national bank) in Seyed Jamehedin Assadabadi street in northern Tehran. The gunmen escaped after a shoot-out with the security guard, who was critically hurt and died later in hospital.

## Wife batters husband for refusing to celebrate

CAIRO (AFP) — An Egyptian woman battered her husband almost to death after he said he would not take her out to celebrate the New Year, Al Ahram daily reported. The 27-year-old woman told police she could not control her fury when her husband said they did not have enough money to go out on New Year's Eve. She attacked him with a "big stick" as he lay in bed and beat him until neighbours broke down the door to save him, the paper said. The woman is being kept in custody until her husband decides whether to press charges against her, it added.

## Somali group calls for Islamic government

MOGADISHU (AFP) — Somalia's largest Islamic organisation, the Al Itihad Al Islam (Unity of Islam), Tuesday appealed to the Somalis not to recognise any future government in the country if it was not based on the Islamic law. "We will support only an Islamic government based on the Koran," said Ahmad Bile Hassan, the information officer for the organisation. He, however, ruled out an Algerian-style armed struggle against any government by the Unity of Islam. "We will just withhold our cooperation," he added. Somalia has been without a government since the overthrow of dictator Mohammad Siad Barre in 1991 and efforts by the United Nations to bring different factions together to discuss the establishment of a government of national unity have failed. The Somalia National Alliance (SNA) faction led by Mohammad Farah Aideed said earlier this month may soon form a government in Mogadishu, after an on-going "national conference" convened by General Aideed last month. Gen. Aideed's rival, Ali Mahdi Mohammad, warned that the formation of government by the SNA leader would lead to the intensification of inter-clan warfare the strife-torn Horn of Africa country. Al Itihad has supported the establishment of Islamic courts which have been dispensing the sharia law, including ordering amputations for thieves and floggings for adultery in northern Mogadishu. An Islamic court recently ordered the stoning to death of man accused of raping a woman.

## Bahraini opposition calls for dialogue

NICOSIA (Agencies) — Two banned Bahraini opposition groups on Tuesday called on the government to open dialogue with Shiite Muslim protest leaders to end conflict which has left an estimated 15 people dead in the Gulf state.

"The only way out of the crisis consists of opening a dialogue with the Islamic figures over their demands, and to free all people arrested during the riots, the Popular Front and the National Front said in a joint statement received here.

"Resorting to ambiguous methods will not help the problem, because it was ignoring the Bahraini people's political and economic demands that led to the crisis."

Another opposition group, the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain, said police arrested some 2,200 people during two weeks of violence between Shiite Muslims and security forces which erupted after the detention of Shiite cleric Sheikh Ali Salman on Dec. 5.

The sheikh had demanded the restoration of parliament, suspended since 1975.

It was the worst violence in Bahrain since the former British protectorate became independent in 1971.

The clashes left 15 dead, eleven demonstrators and four policemen, according to the opposition, but authorities only reported the death of one person, a policeman.

Lorry-loads of riot police on Tuesday posted on the outskirts of the main Shiite Muslim areas in Bahrain to prevent further clashes, said witnesses contacted by telephone from Cyprus.

Bahraini authorities say Shiites make up 35 per cent of the population, but independent sources have put the figure at between 55 and 60 per cent.

Iran's ambassador to Bahrain, Jawad Turk Abadi, has left for Tehran to attend a gathering of Iranian envoys in the region, an Iranian embassy spokeswoman said.

The spokeswoman said Mr. Abadi left Manama on Saturday night and was due to return next Saturday.

Mr. Abadi's departure followed Bahrain's recall of its ambassador in Tehran, Sami Khalil Al Moayyed, for consultation. Mr. Moayyed returned to Bahrain last Thursday.

The move has triggered rumours of souring relations between Iran and Bahrain.

But the embassy spokeswoman said: "Abadi's departure has no link with anything whatsoever. He is coming back next Saturday."

Bahrain's prime minister, Sheikh Khalifa Ben Salman Al Khalifa, told Bahraini businessmen on Sunday that a group from abroad had tried to stir up street violence "to disrupt the peace, stability and brotherhood of Bahrain's single family."



Sultan Qaboos Ben Said of Oman exchanges presents with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in Muscat, during the first-ever visit by an Israeli chief of government to an Arab

## Gulf states edge towards formal ties with Israel

DUBAI (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin made a surprise visit to Oman on Monday for talks with Sultan Qaboos.

In the first ever trip to a head of government from the Jewish state, Mr. Rabin returned to Israel saying he was encouraged to continue the Middle East peace process on Monday (AFP photo)

diplomat in Bahrain told AFP.

"Oman has always adopted a sharply different attitude to Israel than its GCC partners," the diplomat added.

Oman was the only Gulf country not to break off ties with Egypt after it signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1979. It pointed out.

But now "everything has changed since the (1990-91) Gulf crisis, and the Gulf countries who were hesitant seem to accept the idea of establishing ties with Israel," he said.

Saudi Arabia's highest religious authority, mufti Sheikh Abdul Aziz Ben Baz, said for the first time last week that a "permanent peace between Arabs and Israel" was possible.

The sheikh also said he was not opposed to Muslims visiting holy sites in Israeli "inhabited" East Jerusalem.

The Arab diplomat said the mufti's comments "reflect the Saudi government's point of view, which does not dare, however, to speak it aloud in case it further stirs up the conflict between it and Islamic fundamentalists."

Kuwaiti Emir Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah said in October that diplomatic ties with Israel were possible once peace was secured in the Middle East.

Israel's Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin said during a visit to Oman last month that diplomatic relations between Israel and several Arab countries could be established in "the very near future."

An Israeli foreign ministry official said at the time

that Mr. Beilin was to secure an accord with Oman to open interest sections in Muscat and Tel Aviv.

Muscat immediately denied the report.

Oman was the first Gulf country to host an official Israeli delegation, during multilateral negotiations on water resources last April.

It also received a committee of around 100 experts, notably from Israel, in mid-October as part of the multilateral track of the peace process.

A senior Israeli official, who asked not to be named, said Oman was interested in cooperation with Israel in the fields of desalination, water recycling, telecommunications, tourism and solar energy.

For its part Bahrain hosted an Israeli delegation headed by Environment Minister Yossi Sarid to multilateral talks on the environment on October 25.

Israel currently has official relations with five of the Arab League's 22 members. Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said recently he hoped to double that number in 1995.

Egypt became the first Arab country to establish ties with Israel in 1979. Jordan and Israel opened embassies in Tel Aviv and Amman this month following their October peace treaty.

Morocco announced last Sept. it would open liaison offices with the Jewish state. Tunisia and Israel next announced they were opening interest sections, a lower level of diplomatic ties, at the Belgian embassies in Tunis and Tel Aviv.

## Rabbani ready for truce, not resignation

KABUL (AFP) — Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani has declared a unilateral ceasefire in war-torn Kabul, but has not announced his expected resignation from office, an official presidential spokesman said Tuesday.

"President Rabbani has reiterated that he is ready to step down, but he believes a unilateral transfer of power will not solve Afghanistan's problems," Mr. Rabbani's press spokesman Ahmad Morad said.

The statement came after senior pro-Rabbani officials had indicated that he would likely step down at the end of his two-year term of office late this month.

But observers here said the fact that Mr. Rabbani would not resign unless a legitimate interim body to assure a transfer of power had been agreed upon, was not a new development as this had always been his stated position.

But it still remains to be seen whether the president's main rival, Hezb-e-Islami faction leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, will agree to Mr. Rabbani remaining in office after the Dec. 29 deadline, they said.

"The state has called on the opposition to nominate a delegation for talks on a formula for the transfer of power and agreement on a new leader," declared Mr. Morad.

It is understood that a delegation sent by Mr. Rabbani will meet with a similar body from Mr. Hekmatyar's camp Tuesday in order to discuss these issues.

Mr. Morad expressed his disappointment with the United Nations, whose special representative Mahmoud Mestiri has been trying — unsuccessfully — to resolve the Afghan leadership crisis.

"We have waited for the U.N. to come up with a formula for a solution to the Afghan problems but they have not," Mr. Morad said.

Foreign analysts agree that without a permanent high-ranking presence in Kabul, the U.N. cannot exert leverage over the various warring Afghan factions who are now showing greater readiness to negotiate than at any time in the past.

Despite the fact that a small colony of foreign aid workers and journalists has permanently stayed in Kabul through the 30 months of in-fighting since the rebels captured the Afghan capital in April 1992, the U.N. has always cited the lack of security here as a reason for staying away.

The announcement of a "permanent ceasefire" by the pro-Rabbani side may lure the United Nations back to Kabul, where the war-weary citizens face the trials of a cold and hungry winter.

Foreign aid workers in Kabul hope that a mutual agreement on a ceasefire might also lead to an end of the military blockade by Mr. Rabbani's opposition forces.

## COLUMN

### China's MPs want minimum education funding level

HONG KONG (AFP) — Chinese lawmakers have called for a minimum state funding level for education to be set into law and for the establishment of private schools, in a bid to ease chronic cash shortages in the country's educational system, a report said Monday. Qu Geping, a member of the National People's Congress (NPC) parliament standing committee that discussed the draft education law, said the proportion of gross national product (GNP) devoted to education should be stipulated in the bill, the Xinhua News Agency said. "Current funds, or 2.6 per cent of the GNP, can never meet the demand of educating the Chinese people," he was quoted by the official agency as saying in a dispatch monitored here. Qu also proposed a special education tax and called for more schools to be set up by individuals and organisations in a bid to draw more money into the education system. The draft law would allow the establishment of private schools, but leaves the drawing up of "specific regulations" to China's cabinet, the State Council, the dispatch added. But some legislators warned that if the proposal to allow private schools were adopted by the NPC, schools would be carefully scrutinised to prevent profiteers from using the ruling to "make exorbitant profits," Xinhua said. "Most lawmakers have been worried about teachers whose salaries have been delayed or have even gone unpaid by some local governments, something which is becoming quite common across the country," Xinhua said.

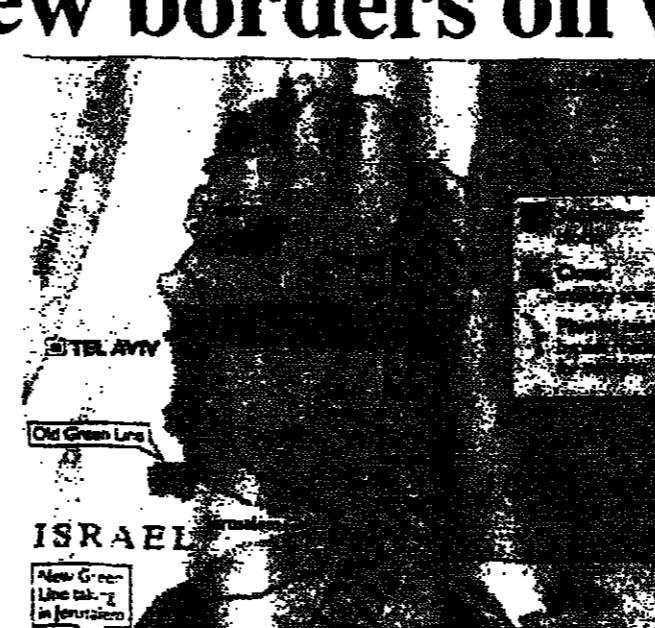
### Simpson enjoying special privileges in jail

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Football star O.J. Simpson, who is on trial for murder, is enjoying special treatment in jail including daily showers and unlimited weekend visitors, the Los Angeles Times reported Monday. The report said most inmates such as Simpson who are in isolation also are given just one hour weekly in the crowded visitors' room, while Simpson is allowed unlimited no-contact visits with his girlfriend Paula Barbieri. Some public defenders are up in arms at the special treatment given the former football star and actor, the paper reported, as their often poor clients get anything but kid-gloves treatment from the judicial system. Simpson also was allowed to welcome visitors on Christmas, while the 6,000 other prisoners at the Los Angeles County's Men's Central Jail had no such holiday privilege, the Times said.

Citing records and interviews, the newspaper also said Simpson was given unlimited use of the attorney visiting area on weekends, was allowed to sleep later than other prisoners and could use about 14 hours daily outside his cell for exercise, watching television or making telephone calls.

### Tokyo to compensate for aircraft noise

TOKYO (AFP) — The Japanese government was ordered by a court to pay 180 million yen (\$1.8 million) to 213 residents living near an airbase in compensation for distress caused by noise from military aircraft. But the high court in Kanazawa, a provincial city northwest of Tokyo, rejected a plea from the residents to halt Japanese and U.S. military flights using the Komatsu Base near the Sea of Japan. Presiding Judge Atsuko Sasamoto said the operation of Japanese military aircraft comes under the jurisdiction of the state minister for defence, and cannot be contested in a civil suit. She also refused to pass any judgement on a high political argument by the plaintiffs, who claim the very existence of Japan's self-defence forces is unconstitutional. Japan's post-World War II constitution renounces war and bans the use of force in settling an international conflict. Anti-war activists have led a campaign to discredit the self-defence forces as unconstitutional.



away at our land," he told AFP.

Outside "greater" Jerusalem, the Israeli building boom is mainly following the old ceasefire line between Israel and Jordan, such as at Alfei Menashe, a residential district of 4,000 inhabitants perched on a hill 15 kilometres east of Tel Aviv.

"Israel is pushing back its boundaries with bulldozers," Palestinian geographer Hala Tufakji said bitterly. Mr. Tufakji marks in minute detail on his maps the daily pattern of Jewish settlement.

"Even if settlement is not pressing ahead everywhere at the same pace, the Jewish state is continuing to nibble

away at our land," he told AFP. Outside "greater" Jerusalem, the Israeli building boom is mainly following the old ceasefire line between Israel and Jordan, such as at Alfei Menashe, a residential district of 4,000 inhabitants perched on a hill 15 kilometres east of Tel Aviv. "We were very worried when Labour came to power, but confidence has returned," said the municipal spokesman, Haim Haim. The construction of around